

Bitter Sweet

SPECIAL WINTER EDITION
TWO DOLLARS

VOLUME SIX, NUMBER TWO
DECEMBER, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY TWO



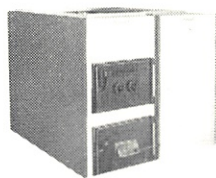
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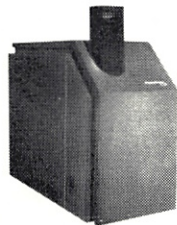


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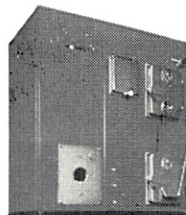
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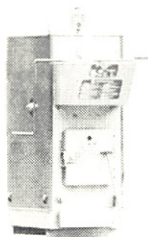
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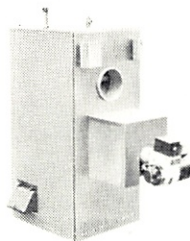
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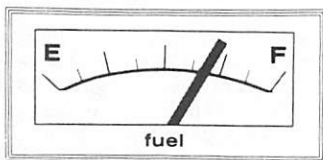
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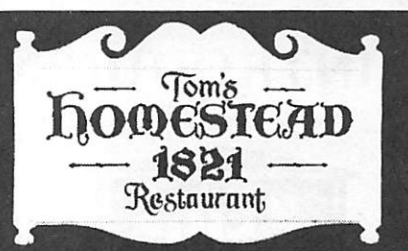
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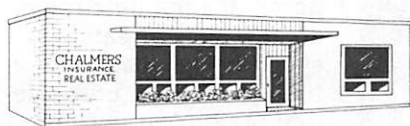
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REAL CONNECTIONS

I am a weaver. All right, so what, you say? You are a knitter, a carpenter, a painter, a baker, perhaps. Maybe you do macramé in your spare time, or gardening is your avocation. We all have hobbies, crafts or arts that we practice. Certainly, I do enjoy drawing, sewing, needlework, too. But I am a weaver.

There seems to be a subtle difference there. It's not that I *do* weaving—in fact, at the moment I don't do very much of it; my four-harness loom is in pieces in the barn of kind relatives in South Waterford, and I haven't much time to finish a multi-color tapestry I started on a portable frame over a year ago. But that makes no difference, you see. I am a weaver. That's something really elemental. Basic.

It seems to me that, once you learn to take one thread and combine it with another and another, and cross it with still others—making endless combinations of color, pattern texture—you will never see

things quite the same way again. The design of everything in life that you look at will make itself much more clear. Connections will be noticed more easily by the weaver, somehow.

Once you've taken into your hands lanolin-filled fleece of simple creatures whose wonderful coats were created to be so miraculously capable of being combed, spun into yarn, dyed any color, woven into fabric for human use; you cannot help but perceive miracles in other creatures, other events. Once you've taken the strands of a growing plant, dipped them into simmering pots of color made from other plants, lichens, and minerals of the earth, and strung them in intricate orders across loom beams to create coverlets of stunning, lasting beauty; then you can truly appreciate the other creative acts of human minds.

So I am a weaver. I see the strands of my life woven together: children, family, friends, occupation, God, nature, ideas, art. I almost cannot bear to have a strand break. Certainly the strands change—they become new patterns, go in different directions—but they continue on, nevertheless.

Making a magazine seems to be rather like weaving together thoughts and stories, pictures and words into a coherent whole with a pleasing pattern, a satisfying intent and design. It becomes rather a tapestry of Maine, I think. Don't you?

A poem I once read—its origins at this moment escape me—advised that one *weave real connections, create real nodes, build real houses, live life that is real*. This issue is full of people who unknowingly took that advice. They are good people, living good lives. Some of them are very involved with those creatures giving good wool to enrich our lives.

All of us here at BitterSweet wish for all of you an interwoven, satisfying winter. See you in February, with our March, 1983 issue.

Nancy Marcotte

Note: We did not catch a couple of typographical errors in November copy: The painting *Confidences* in the Payson Gallery piece is, of course, by Pierre Renoir, not Jean Renoir—great filmmaker and son of the great painter. We did know better, having been admirers of both artists for years. However, many thanks to the great Martin Dibner for pointing it out to this addled editor. In this issue, you will find a story by Martin on our cover artist—his delightful “find,” Cissy Buchanan. His book, *Seacoast Maine* was recently reissued, this time in soft cover; and his latest novel, *Devil's Paintbrush*, will soon be printed. Our apologies, also to Jack Barnes, whose *Spider Webs* poem should have begun with the line, *Walking along the pasture lane*.

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ME. 04268

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Office Location: 15 Main Street, South
Paris, ME. 04281. You will not
always be able to reach someone
in the office. Please keep trying.

BitterSweet is published: 10 times
annually (March - November & a
bigger issue for winter months).

Subscription Rate: \$10.00 per year.
(\$11.50 foreign addresses.) Sub-
scriptions are welcome any time.
Either send in the form in this
issue or print the name, address,
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Back Issues: Available for \$2.00 each.

Deadlines: Editorial & Advertising 6
weeks prior to publication date
(the first of each issue month).
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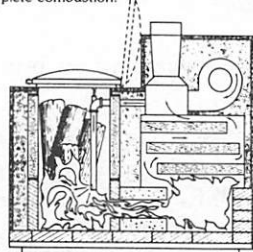
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FILMS: Sundays at 2 p.m., Science Lecture Hall, Admission \$2.00 adults/\$1.00 students. Jan. 16: "Animal Crackers" (Marx Bros.). Jan. 23: The original "Hunchback of Notre Dame" (Lon Chaney). Jan. 30: "The Tramp" (Charlie Chaplin), "Twice Two" (Laurel & Hardy) & "The Barbershop" (W. C. Fields). Feb. 13: "The African Queen" (Bogart & Hepburn). Feb. 20: "Rebel Without A Cause" (James Dean, 1954). Feb. 27: "Never Give A Sucker An Even Break" (W. C. Fields).

MUSIC

Dec. 4 & 5: "Joyeux Noel" - Peter Frewen, director. Christmas music in French, Latin & English by the Androscoggin Chorale. Bates College Chapel, Lewiston, Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m. Donations.

Dec. 5: Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" and Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #5. Bates College/Community Chamber Orchestra, William Matthews, director. Bates College Chapel, 8 p.m. Free.

Dec. 18: Special Concert of Handel's "Messiah" by the Portland Choral Arts Society, to benefit the Oxford Hills Y.M.C.A. Oxford Hills High School Auditorium, 8:00 p.m. Admission \$3.00 adults/\$2.00 children.

Jan. 22: Connecticut Opera Express present Donizetti's madcap comedy "Elixir of Love," Jewett Hall Auditorium, U. M. Augusta (English, in a Wild West setting), 8 p.m., \$6.50. For reservations: 622-7131, ext. 212.

LPL PLUS APL

FILMS: Sundays at 2 p.m., Promenade Twin Cinema, Lewiston. Admission \$2.50. Dec. 5: "Stevie" (British, Glenda Jackson). Jan. 16: "Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears" (Russian, 1981 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Film). Feb. 16: "Melvin and Howard" (Paul Le Mat, Jason Robards). Feb. 27: "Atlantic City" (Burt Lancaster, Susan Sarandon).

OTHER EVENTS: Jan. 14: Stromberg & Cooper Family Theatre, Central School Auditorium Auburn, 7:30 p.m. Admission charged. Jan. 28: Sharon Robinson, Cellist, in concert with Margo Garrett, Pianist. Bates College Chapel, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 11: Dirigo Brass Quintet (baroque to jazz), United Baptist Church, 250 Main St., Lewiston, 7:45 p.m. \$3.00 adult/\$1.50 child. For more information on LPL Plus APL: 36 Oak St., Lewiston, 782-7228.

ETC.

MARSDEN HARTLEY, Visionary of Maine: Exhibit & Poetry Readings. Until Dec. 5: Payson Gallery of Art, Westbrook College. Dec. 16-Feb. 17: Treat Gallery, Bates College, Lewiston. Poetry Reading Jan. 13.

PAYSON GALLERY, WESTBROOK COLLEGE: Dec. 12-Jan. 23: Mixed Media, work of Maine Artists. Jan. 30-Mar. 13: Jack Muench, Founder of Maine Printmaking Workshop; Payson Collection of Paintings & Lithographs.

Dec. 12: "Rose of Roses, Flower of Flowers," Family Christmas Program at U.M. Augusta, featuring Trio Live Oak & Mime Jackson Gilman. Jewett Hall Aud. Call 622-7131, ext. 212 for reservations.

Dec. 15: Deadline for ms. subscription to spring issue of "Kennebec: a portfolio of Maine Writing." Send to Kennebec, U.M. Augusta 04330.

We have excerpted only a few chapters of Kate Douglas Wiggin's fine novel.
To read more about the Shaker life and about John Hathaway's struggle, please visit your library.

Susanna and Sue

by Kate Douglas Wiggin

Love Manifest

The woods on the shores of Massabesic Pond were stretches of tapestry, where every shade of green and gold, olive and brown, orange and scarlet, melted the one into the other. The somber pines made a deep-toned background; patches of sumac gave their flaming crimson; the goldenrod grew rank and tall in glorious profusion, and the maples outside the Office Building were balls of brilliant carmine. The air was like crystal, and the landscape might have been bathed in liquid amber, it was so saturated with October yellow.

Susanna caught her breath as she threw her chamber window wider open in the early morning; for the greater part of the picture had been painted during the frosty night.

"Throw your little cape 'round your shoulders and come quickly, Sue!" she exclaimed.

The child ran to her side. "Oh, what a goldy, goldy morning!" she cried.

One crimson leaf with a long heavy stem that acted as a sort of rudder, came down to the window-sill with a sidelong scooping flight, while two or three gayly painted ones, parted from the tree by the same breeze, floated airily along as if borne on unseen wings, finally alighting on Sue's head and shoulders like tropical birds.

"You cried in the night, Mardie!" said Sue. "I heard you sniffing and getting up for your hank'chief; but I did n't speak 'cause it's so dreadful to be *caught* crying."

"Kneel down beside me and give me part of your cape," her mother answered. "I'm going to let my sad heart fly right out the window into those beautiful trees."

"And maybe a glad heart will fly right in!" the child suggested.

"Maybe. — Oh! We must cuddle close and be still. Elder Gray's going down to sit under the great maple; and do you see, all the Brothers seem to be up early this morning, just as we are?"

"More love, Elder Gray," called Issachar, on his way to the tool-house.

"More love, Brother Issachar!"

"More love, Brother Ansel!"

"More love, Brother Calvin!"

"More love!" "More love!" "More love!" So the quaint but not uncommon Shaker greeting passed from Brother to Brother; and as Tabitha and Martha and Rosetta met on their way to dairy and laundry and seed-house, they, too, hearing the salutation, took up the refrain, and Susanna and Sue heard again from the women's voices that beautiful morning wish, "More love!" "More love!" speeding from heart to heart and from lip to lip.

Mother and child were very quiet.

"More love, Sue!" said Susanna, clasping her closely.

"More love, Mardie," whispered the child, smiling and entering into the spirit of the salutation. "Let's turn our heads Farnham way! I'll take Jack and you take Fardie, and we'll say togedder, 'More love,' shall we?"

"More love, John."

"More love, Jack."

The words floated out over the trees in the woman's trembling voice and the child's treble. . .

"More love, Martha!" said Susanna when she met Martha a little later in the day.

"More love, Susanna!" Martha replied cheerily. "You heard our Shaker greeting, I see! It was the beautiful weather, the fine air and glorious colors, that brought the inspiration this morning, I guess! It took us all out of doors and then it seemed to get into the blood. Besides, tomorrow's the Day of Sacrifice, and that takes us all on the mountain-tops of feeling. There have been times when I had to own up to a lack of love."

"You, Martha, who have such wonderful influence over the children, such patience, such affection!"

"It was n't always so. When I was first put in charge of the children, I did n't like the work. They did n't respond to me somehow, and when

they were out of sight, they were ugly and disobedient. My natural mother, Maria Holmes, took care of the girls' clothing. One day she said to me, 'Martha, do you love the girls?'

"Some of them are very unlovely," I replied.

"I know that," she said, 'but you can never help them unless you love them.'

"I thought mother very critical, for I strove scrupulously to do my duty. A few days after this the Elder said to me, 'Martha, do you love the girls?' I responded, 'Not very much.'

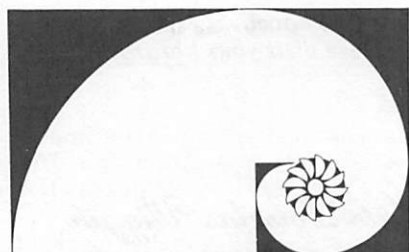
"You cannot save them unless you love them," he said.

"Then I answered, 'I will labor for a gift of love.'

"When the work of the day was over, and the girls were in bed, I would take off my shoes and spend several hours of the night walking the floor, kneeling in prayer that I might obtain the coveted gift. For five weeks I did this without avail, when suddenly one night when the moon was full and I was kneeling by the window; a glory seemed to overshadow the crest of a high mountain in the distance. I thought I heard a voice say: 'Martha, I baptize you into the spirit of love!' I sat there trembling for more than an hour, and when I rose, I felt that I could love the meanest human being that ever walked the earth. I have never had any trouble with the children since that night of the vision. They seem different to me, and I dare say I am different to them."

"I wish I could see visions!" exclaimed Susanna. "Oh, for a glory that would speak to me and teach me truth and duty! Life is all mist, whichever way I turn. I'd like to be lifted on to a high place where I could see clearly."

She leaned against the frame of the open kitchen door, her delicate face quivering with emotion and longing, her attitude simplicity and unconsciousness itself. The baldest of Shaker



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prose turned to purest poetry when Susanna dipped it in the alembic of her own imagination.

"Labor for the gift of sight!" said Martha, who believed implicitly in spirits and visions. "Labor this very night."

It must be said for Susanna that she had never ceased laboring in her own way for many days. The truth was that she felt herself turning from marriage . . . Curiously enough, and unfortunately enough for Susannah Hathaway's peace of mind, the greater aversion she felt towards the burden of the old life, towards the irksomeness of guiding a weaker soul, towards the claims of husband on wife, the stronger those claims appeared. If they had never been assumed! —Ah, but they had; there was the rub! One sight of little Sue sleeping tranquilly beside her; one memory of the rebellious, faulty Jack; one vision of John, either as needing or missing her, the rightful woman, or falling deeper in the wiles of the wrong one for very helplessness; —any one of these changed Susanna the would-be saint, in an instant, into Susanna the wife and mother.

"Speak to me for Thy Compassion's sake," she prayed from the little book of Confessions that her mother had given her, "I will follow after Thy Voice!"

"Would you betray your trust?" asked conscience.

"No, not intentionally."

"Would you desert your post?"

"Never, willingly."

"You have divided the family; taken a little quail bird out of the home-nest and left sorrow behind you. Would God justify you in that?"

For the first time, Susanna's "No" rang clearly enough for her to hear it plainly; for the first time it was followed by no vague misgivings, no bewilderment, no unrest or indecision. "I turn hither and thither; Thy purposes are hid from me, but I commend my soul to Thee!"

Then a sentence from the dear old book came into her memory: "And thy dead things shall revive, and thy weak things shall be made whole."

She listened, laying hold of every word, till the nervous clenching of her hands subsided, her face relaxed into peace. Then she lay down beside Sue, creeping close to her for the warmth and comfort and healing . . .

The Hills of Home

Susanna had found Sue in the upper chamber at the Office Building, and began to make the simple preparations for her homeward journey . . . Sue interfered with the packing somewhat by darting to and fro, bringing her mother sacred souvenirs given her by the Shaker sisters and the children—needle-books, pin-balls, thimble-cases, packets of flower seeds, polished pebbles, bottles of flavoring extract.

"This is for Fardie," she would say, "and this for Jack and this for Ellen and this for Aunt Louise—the needle-book 'cause she's so useful. Oh, I'm glad we're going home, Mardie, though I do love it here, and I was most ready to be a truly Shaker. It's kind of pityish to have your hair shingled and your stocking half-knitted and know how to say 'Yea,' and have it all wasted."

Susanna dropped a tear on the dress she was folding. The child was going home, as she had come away from it, gay, irresponsible and merry; it was only the mothers who hoped and feared and dreaded.

The very universe was working toward Susanna's desire at that moment, but she was all unaware of the happiness that lay so near. She could not see the freshness of the house in Farnham, the new bits of furniture here and there; the autumn leaves in her own bedroom; her work-table full of the records of John's sorrowful summer; Jack handsomer and taller, and softer, also, in his welcoming mood; Ellen rosy and excited. She did not know that Joel Atterbury had said to John that day, "I take it all back, old man, and I hope you'll stay on in the firm!"; nor that Aunt Louisa, who was putting stiff, short-stemmed chrysanthemums in cups and tumblers here and there through the house, was much more flexible and human than was natural to her; nor that John, alternating between hope and despair, was forever humming:

Set her place at hearth and board
As it used to be;

Higher are the hills of home,
Bluer is the sea!

It is often so. They who go weeping to look for the dead body of a sorrow, find a vision of angels where the body has lain. . .

Twilight deepened into dusk, and
Page 16 . . .

"Eee-yah! Eee-yah!"

"Stupid!"

"They're not stupid, we are! For raising them! Don't let them get around the pool... oh, no! There they go!"

The sheep are out—again. Someone (not me, I swear it) left the barn door open. They must have smelled clover because the whole flock immediately scampered down the lane toward the back field. And the clover.

I climbed into my Volkswagen van and went after them, but you can't herd sheep with a van. I chased them back up the lane where they conscientiously avoided the open barn door, opting instead to skitter around the swimming pool (an above-ground model, fortunately), the garage and the hay shed. After which they wheeled past us and galloped back down the lane.

This time I had to jog down behind them, having left my van by the cornfield. The dog raced joyously beside me, happy to take part in the event but offering no real assistance.

Our youngest teen, alert to any opportunity to ride her horse, climbed bareback onto her palomino and executed a cowgirl routine. But when returned, the sheep continued to be repulsed by that barn door.

After this had been repeated a third time, I gave up. I called my husband who was working about a mile distant. He arrived posthaste to eye our herding efforts with disdain.

"I hope they didn't get into my cornfield!"

"Well, part of it," I admitted, not really sure how far they had gone during their last foray.

Ignoring our methods of collecting sheep, he brought a pail of grain from the barn. He rattled the pail.

"Here, sheep! Here, sheep!"

Propelled by a single intent, the sheep turned and followed him into the barn.

Why can't I ever remember that it's easier to lead sheep than chase them?

We've been leading and chasing sheep for twenty years. Other Mainers have recently joined the sheep industry. Suburbanites, retirees and young homesteaders, seeking ways to put surplus acres to work, have found



For The Love of Sheep

The return of an age-old business
by Allison Williams



Brooke Hidell of Windham tries his hand at spinning, assisted by Abigail Lumsden at the Sheep & Wool Crafts Festival

in sheep a means to fill the family freezer and pay their taxes. It's a method of engaging in part-time farming without the monetary investment needed for cattle or the labor investment needed for crops.

The major difficulty has been marketing. Those who raised lambs for the spring market, selling their animals at about 45 pounds for the traditional Easter meal enjoyed by our Greek population, did fairly well until this year. Then a combination of events precipitated a slump which has caused even long-time growers to look carefully at future investments in sheep.

There were too many lambs availa-

ble this past spring. Also, imported wool, mostly from Argentina, drastically affected the wool prices offered to local growers.

To help create a livelier market for both wool and lambs, the Southern Maine Sheep Association has, for the past four years, sponsored a **Sheep and Wool Crafts Festival** at Cumberland Fairgrounds. It's a relaxed, friendly event with two days of ongoing demonstrations in sheering, spinning, weaving, lamb-grading, sheep dog trials and sheep shows.

Craft booths offer everything from sheep supplies and sweaters to mugs and thimbles depicting every shepherd's favorite animal. The folks attending are encouraged to take part in the spinning and weaving demonstrations. Lunch is—you guessed it—lamb, cooked to perfection by the Sheep Association members.

We watched young Brooke Hidell of Windham, a member of the Cumberland County 4-H Sheep Club, try out a new kind of spinning wheel, the Clemmes kit, which can be purchased in California. Abigail Lumsden, the demonstrator who assisted him, explained that junior high schoolers "pick up spinning pretty fast."

Cathy Decsipkes, a young woman interested in spinning, tried out a Loriet wheel, which is quite similar. These small wheels operated by a spinner who sits facing the spindle have been used in Europe for a long time, but have been available in the U.S. only for the past five years.

Sharing the spotlight with sheep



Homespun yarn is produced on a Loriet wheel by Candy Decsipkes. She wasn't sure of her expertise but enjoyed the experience

during the festival were the border collies who came from various areas of New England to demonstrate that mystical association between man and dog that makes a collie so useful to sheepowners.

Alert to the whistled or shouted commands of their masters, they brought their charges from the further end of the parade grounds, herding them through two gates and into a small pen. All without once rattling a pail of grain!

There was a brisk business in the small red whistles used for directing the dogs; most were being purchased by youngsters who quickly became adept at irritating their parents with newly-acquired whistling skills. The canny little dogs ignored all whistles except those issued by their masters.

Whether such events as the Sheep and Wool Crafts Festival actually spark interest in purchasing meat lambs is debatable because most of those attending are probably already associated with the industry. We did find it to be a good showplace for sheep, who are often overshadowed by other attractions at the county fairs.

Because the low meat prices of this past spring will cause some growers to cut back on flock numbers, the law of supply and demand may improve the 1983 meat market.

The same law becomes more complicated for the wool market, which is affected by import tariffs and the devaluation of currency in Australia,

the nation which exports more wool than any other.

Yet, if you have enough wool and are willing to do your own retailing, there are ways to profitably market it.

In Maine, Bartlettyarns in Harmony is the only mill catering to small growers who want their wool converted into yarn. Once my husband has completed shearing our own flock and others for whom he performs this service yearly, we make our annual trip to Harmony. The truck is packed with huge bags of wool, each holding approximately 200 pounds of fleece. We return home with undyed or heather yarn to sell.

The mill itself is an unprepossessing building on the bank of a stream where Ozias Bartlett constructed his first mill in 1821. It burned down many years later, was rebuilt, and when sold to Carl Titcomb in 1947 had been owned by four generations of Bartletts.

The newest owner, Russell Pierce, an out-of-stater who recognized a good investment in the elderly mill, says that what makes Bartlettyarns mill unique is its *spinning mule*. It is the last of two such machines still operating in the U.S. and works somewhat like a spinning wheel, producing yarn with a loft similar to that of home-spuns.

Pierce prefers using New England wool. Between 40,000 and 50,000 pounds is brought in each year to be processed. After his grease (raw) wool has been scoured, processed, and spun,

the shepherd takes home in yarn 45% of its net weight.

But unless he trucks 1000 pounds or more wool to the mill, he doesn't actually return home with his own wool; rather he is trading it for some already processed.

When it's scoured, much of the lanolin is left in the wool so that after being dyed the yarn retains a heathery softness. In the small shop across the road from the mill I admire a rainbow of pastel yarns while Sylvia Bagley takes our order for this year's yarn shipment: ten pounds of sheep's gray, ten pounds of red heather, ten pounds of burgundy, five pounds of plum . . .

Some if it she has in stock and this we will take home with us. The rest will arrive at the farm over the next few months. While waiting for our yarn to be bagged, I admire Sylvia's deft hand as she twists skeins for shipment. The warm, homey scent of wool surrounds us in the crowded shop where a collection of knitting books shares space with bags of yarn; hand-knit socks, caps, mittens; skeins being readied for shipment; and other paraphernalia. When our yarn is ready, I leave regretfully for the long ride back home to Southern Maine.

Enroute, we discuss next year's prospects. Should we expand our flock? Raise our wool prices? Sell more meat lambs?

For many years sheep growers have been at the mercy of the Boston meat buyers, having to accept whatever prices they were offered. But times are changing. Sheepmen are looking for other markets.

By a happy circumstance this past spring, we were able to personally contact several Greek families who came to the farm, picked out their own lambs, did their own slaughtering, and left to roast them on spits for the traditional Greek Easter which in 1982 arrived two weeks later than ours.

The whole event had a festive atmosphere. They arrived on our Easter morning, bringing coffee and Easter bread. The men went to work under the direction of one member who had been a shepherd in Greece before emigrating to the U.S. My husband assisted, I traded my Easter bread for theirs, we discussed methods of cooking lamb, and served refreshments on an upturned barrel in the

Page 24 . . .



Bartlettyarns of Harmony

Above: Sylvia Bagley twists skeins at the Bartlettyarns mill shop.

Right: Russell Pierce, new owner of an old Maine mill, finds the demand for all-wool yarns is increasing



Ayah

letters to the editor

NOTES AND NUDGES

I love this magazine. Keep up the good work.

Colette Roche
Gorham

Just a short note to tell you I thoroughly enjoy all of my magazines . . . I am making sure I don't miss a single issue. Thanks for pleasurable reminiscing.

Jay Lello
Scarborough

Ed. Note: Rev. Lello and his family are fondly remembered by many for his years at Second Congregational Church, Norway.

"Maine Is Apple Country" in the October issue of **BitterSweet** is a most interesting article. I think, however, that a man of Mr. Weston's caliber would not use a double negative when speaking: "If you had an orchard of all McIntosh, you wouldn't have no apples?" Perhaps Mr. Barnes misquoted Mr. Weston?

Signe Tarbox
West Newfield

Ed. Note: Perhaps it was a misquote—though Jack Barnes has a sharp ear for dialect and worked from a tape-recording of Mr. Weston. We do find the double negative to be a very common figure of speech in Maine—so, probably it was true.

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoy **BitterSweet**. My mother and her brother and sisters grew up in South Paris in a big house on Western Ave. After the young people left, my grandparents, Ben and Imogene Swett, lived there into their eighties (about 1930) when they died. About every two years during my childhood, my mother and I would take a train from Utah to Maine to visit "home." There would be a reunion of relatives—such a joyful time!

I had not been back since 1956 for my mother's funeral at the Locke family plot in West Paris. I was so pleased to discover my grandparents' house is still standing and well taken care of by the present owners, the Tituses. Best wishes . . .

Imogene Locke Worlund
Chicago, Illinois

Yesterday while waiting for a prescription in the drug store, I spied the magazine and promptly bought it. What a lot you and your colleagues have done for this publication in two years! I shall be sure to buy it from now on . . . I was pleased to find the (article) by Jane Perham. In my days



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at Camp Bendito ('37-'45) we knew Mr. Perham and his shop well and made many trips with "Uncle George" Howe of Norway . . . Best wishes to you all for success with your delightful magazine.

Elizabeth Hosmer Cutcliffe
North Edgecomb

Ed. Note: The many fans of George Howe will be glad to know we have an article on him planned for the future.

DR. LOWELL BARNES

I find myself confined to a coronary care unit, anguished because my youthful body has a worn-out pump. Oh damn!! Enclosed below are thoughts that welled forth from this caged animal.

*Early dawn suffuses Eastern sky
Purple, lavender clouds in ribbony display
Touched lightly with radiant scarlets of
rising sun*

*I yearn to be released to meander
Through the quiet forested trails
To listen to the vexed chatter of squirrels,
high in evergreen's top,
Chipmunk's scolding mark my passage
Warning signals to those beyond
That strange animal stealths along this
rock-strewn path*

*Close by—mountain stream lends its
laughing trill*

*As icemelt from above cascades down over
gray granite stones*

*Lacey moss-laden mounds form the walls
of this mountain rill.*

*I walk because I must walk,
I must fill my senses to their entirety
With each bit of nature's majesty that
surrounds me*

*Each day so important to live, to know,
to experience,*

*To be filed away within the archives
of my computer brain.*

*If YOU are listening to my idle banter
Oh BEING that governs my destiny,*

*Thank YOU for that which YOU
have given me—*

But please, before it ends

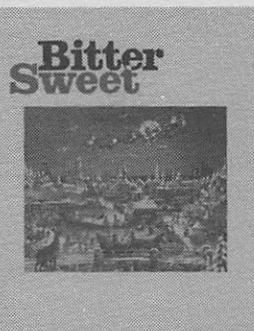
Let those that I live for—somehow

*Somehow know—that without their gifts
of love*

I would have been not but an empty shell.

I enjoy your diversity of materials, your goal in attempting to present something of "Maineism"—pride in what used to be. Perhaps visualized by our out-of-state visitors we are "damned hicks"—but I take pride in my birth in a shack on Crockett Ridge, pride in being Mellie Dunham's first grandchild. (See *BitterSweet*, March, 1982.) It is imperative we must maintain contact with the past and endeavor to instill our youth with those ties to the foundations of Maine. Let none of us grow so rapidly that we lose touch with our pasts from whence we clambored upwards.

Dr. Lowell Barnes
Hiram

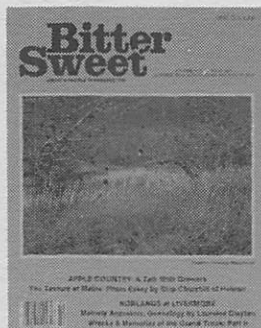


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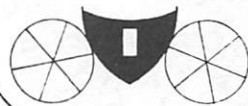
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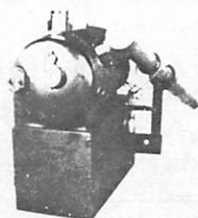
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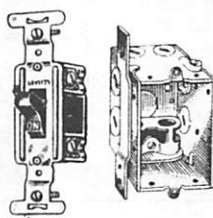
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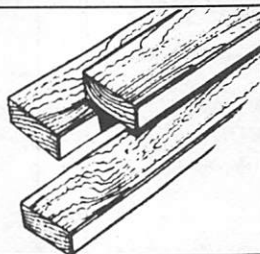
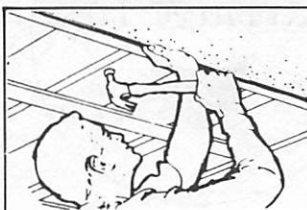
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CHARDIA FARMS OF HARRISON: *A New Breed*

Rick Berry always wanted to farm. But for a long time it seemed as if there were too many strikes against him. For one thing, he had left his native Portland, Maine,



and was working in business in Massachusetts. And then, his wife Gloria, a Gorham native, had a severe allergy. Still, they acquired a few sheep and searched for several years for a farm they liked, without success.

But this year, Gloria says, everything just came together: Rick retired from business and her allergy "just disappeared." Then they found a beautiful farm for sale—my grandparents' place on Maple Ridge in Harrison (see "BitterSweet Views," June, 1982).

There were over 75 sheep at the Berrys' Chardia Farm this fall, and more being born every day. Gone are the days of only spring lambs—for modern-day shepherds it's accelerated lambing: their flock expands all year long.

These are very special sheep. They are *Targhees*—a breed so new the Berrys believe they are the only ones with purebreds in Maine. A breed which originated in Idaho, it has prospered in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wyoming. They're hardy enough for the Rocky Mountains, so can withstand New England winters.

Targhee sheep are valued both for their meat and their fleece, which was a first prize winner—to the apparent surprise of other breeders—at the Cumberland lamb and sheep show (see page 7). It's a very fine fleece—baby-soft and ready to spin without carding.

The Berrys are serious about raising sheep. They are working closely with the State Department of Poultry and Livestock to plan their flock. Mrs. Berry and son Mark, an agriculture student at U.N.H., took a trip to Wyoming last July for the National Targhee Show and Sale. She says they are good flock and range sheep, both.

Mr. Berry has put a lot of time and effort into the building of his farm. The property had not been a working farm for many years, so fields had to be fenced and

cleared; pens for the handsome, friendly ram, and for newborn lambs with their mothers were built inside the barn; the stone-walled under-barn was excavated deeper and closed in to make a fine heavy-weather enclosure for the flock.



Page 15...



In a 1979 photo, George (left) and Joseph Robinson (right) stand in front of bolts of their finished woolen product.

ROBINSON Manufacturing Company: 130 years in the wool business

by Nancy Marcotte

It's a long way from wool in its natural state on the flanks of sheep in Australian or Argentine or European hillside pastures to the jewel tones and earth colors of this season's coats and suits on runway models from New York's garment district. But a good deal of the quality wool which makes that journey passes through Oxford, Maine, where for 130 years the Robinson family has been overseeing the manufacture of wool textile fabric.

Two hundred and eighty tons of wool in bales weighing anywhere from 200 to 1000 pounds come into Robinson Mfg. Co. each month—indeed from all over the world. Soft Argentine wool, silky Australian wool, South African, European, even wool plucked from sheep raised for food in New Zealand—all come through these doors, some to be combined with a mixture of nylon (for strength and durability) and to produce coat, suit, sportswear, and upholstery fabric. The Egyptian camel helps to produce the famed Kezar Cloth: 100% camelhair fabric prized by garment manufacturers.

Maine sheep—a newly-rebuilding agricultural enterprise—also yield eight or nine thousand pounds of wool a year.

Two Robinson brothers run daily affairs at the mill, founded in the late 1850's by their great-great grandfather, Joseph Robinson. He was a British dyer who emigrated from Yorkshire to this country in 1848, landing in Boston with his young wife Frances, his family, the clothes on their backs, and two copper pennies. The first Robinson came to Oxford via mills in Rochester, Milton Mills, and Wolfboro, New Hampshire.

George Robinson, 27, President, and Joseph Robinson, 30, Vice President in charge of production, have considerably more to manage now than there was in pre-Civil War days when the original Joseph moved his wife and 15

children here and went into partnership with H. J. & F. O. Libby of Portland to buy a small existing mill structure. Under the personal direction of the family, the Robinson company developed the most beautiful and permanent shade of blue woolen cloth in the country. Soldiers from New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire marched off to the Civil War in uniforms of fadeless Oxford Blue and the factory was driven to its capacity. That flourishing 19th century mill—housed in one five-story building from 1865 until about 1875 when the top floor burned—is now part of a 4-acre, 125,000-sq. ft. complex in Oxford and joined with another mill, the 100,000-sq. ft. Kezar Falls Woolen Company.

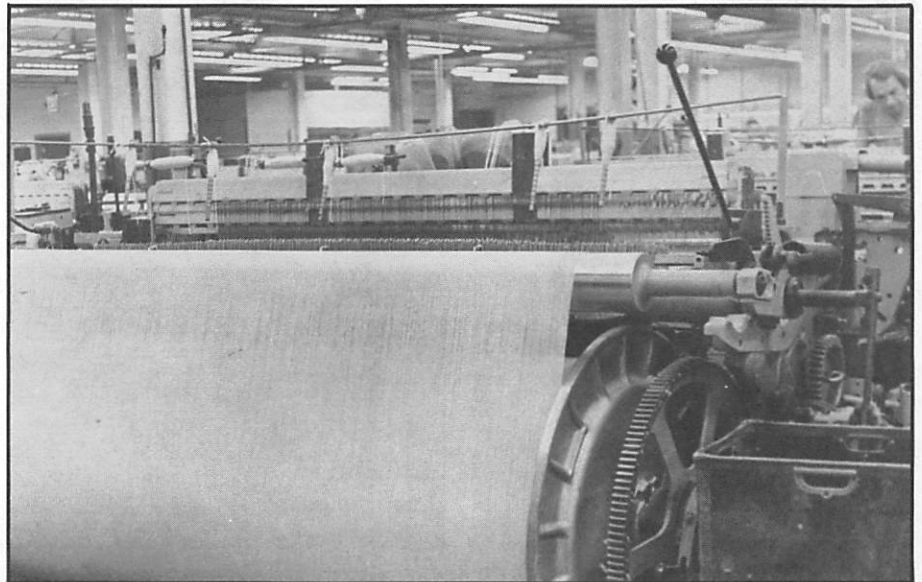
John B. Robinson, father of the present management team, not too long ago stepped "up" to the position of Chairman of the Board and perpetuated a

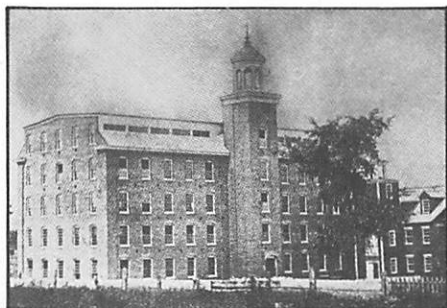
textile mill "dynasty" that has continued unbroken nearly a century and a half. There are 350+ employees between the two woolen mills; some of them are many-generation and many-year Robinson workers. They know John and George and Joe personally. In Oxford, over 85% of the mill workforce is local.

Parts of the mill are original, but many modernization steps have been taken. New buildings were added in 1895, 1960, and 1966. In the early 1950's, the Oxford mill finally converted from water power to electricity.

The biggest change of all came in 1976, when the town of Oxford voted to close one of its roads in order for the mill to build a 28,000-sq. ft. building addition, including 8,000 square feet for blending and raw stock storage, and a 300,000-gallon-a-day plant for the treatment of water containing detergents

Below, the most sophisticated weaving machine in the world. Swiss in manufacture, it has 2000 "ends" (warp strands) across its beam and can weave 285 "picks" (filler threads) per minute.

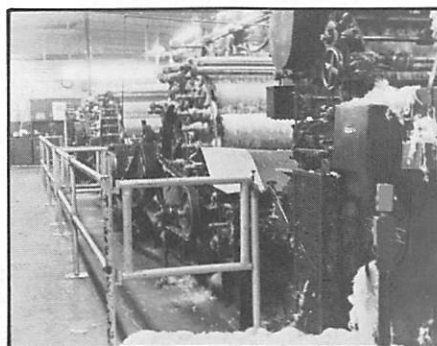




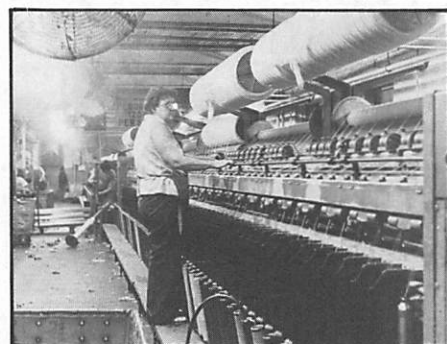
At left, Robinson Manufacturing Company in 1865. Below, an aerial view of the plant today—by George Robinson



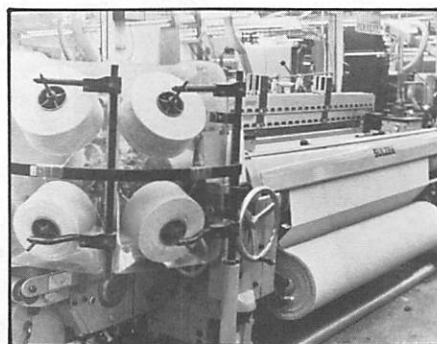
Weighing & blending of raw stock in picker room



Carding machinery



Elsie Pechnik at spinning frame



The weaving in process

and wastes from scouring, washing, and dyeing of wool (as well as the plant's domestic waste and that of the Oxford Elementary School). "That 28,000 extra square feet increased our productivity by 40%," says George. And the modernization continues. Currently, Robinson is completing an \$800,000 expansion including a sludge storage tank, belt filter dewatering press, and clarifier (settling tank) which will increase the existing treatment plant's capacity to 500,000 gallons a day and improve the water quality of the Little Androscoggin River and Thompson Lake outlet. Robinson Manufacturing has always tried to be a good neighbor as well as a good employer for the town which has shown its acceptance of them.

The process of preparing raw wool for weaving remains today much as it was (and is) for primitive hand-weavers, only on a much greater scale. Raw fleece still must be "picked" (rid of debris), "carded" (combed with metal fingers), spun into long fibers, then woven together and "fulled" (washed to help the fibers "full" or felt together as fabric). Picking and fiber blending is done at the Oxford plant, then the wool is trucked daily to Kezar Falls—a "greige" mill responsible for yarn production and weaving (carding, spinning, dressing the loom, and the actual production of cloth). Back in Oxford, the woven cloth is scoured, dyed, and finished.

The personal attention of a dedicated "family" of employees and reliable equipment assures Joe Robinson that he can guarantee excellent bolts of 60" wide coating (16 oz./yd.) and sportswear (10-12 oz./yd.) fabric will leave Oxford for Robinson's exclusive selling agent—Warshaw Woolen Assoc., Inc., 111 W. 40th St., New York—to sell to clothing manufacturers all over the world.*

"The textile industry is not cyclical," George Robinson tells us. "It is up and down with a recessionary economy. But we have a strong backlog of orders—a result of our quality product, regular long-time customers, and excellent workforce."

That's not a bad result of 130 years of family business.

Crystal Trundy photographs of the interior of the mill originally appeared in The Lewiston Daily Sun.

**Robinson woolsens are also available at the company store—Oxford Mill End.*

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4. Properly install woodstoves. (Check with your local fire department for their tips and inspections.)
5. Install smoke detectors near sleeping areas.
6. Set water heaters lower than 130°.
7. Test bathwater before immersing yourself or child.
8. Keep chemicals, toxic substances, matches and flammable liquids out of the house, in safe containers, and out of childrens' reach.
9. Continuously supervise children.
10. Keep pot and pan handles on the stove turned in.
11. Always check your path and keep children away when carrying hot liquids.
12. Keep cookies and other goodies away from stoves.
13. Keep fire extinguisher in a convenient location near exit furthest from stove.
14. Don't wear loose clothing near stoves or fires.
15. Never douse a flaming pan with water. Smother fires with lid or cookie sheet.
16. NEVER smoke in bed.
17. Avoid using extension cords.
18. Keep lamps and candles away from beds, drapes, and other combustibles.
19. Store lawn-mowers and gas-run machines empty.
20. Keep water in plastic containers in ALL rooms.



This is just part of a checklist for burn prevention and burn emergency care put out by the Shrine of North America—whose Burn Institutes in Boston, Cincinnati and Galveston offer free burn treatment to children under the age of 18.

... Page 12 Chardia Farm

Additionally, Gloria Berry has had a former corner of the barn's main floor built into a small store—the Sheep Shop, as a beautiful hand-carved wooden sign proclaims outside. In it she sells things from fleece and skins to halters and wool, to dishes and bags imprinted with their favorite animal. She has recently taught herself to spin on a wheel. Their main occupation, however, is raising and promoting lamb as a meat source.

Chardia Farms is now taking orders for freezer lamb, which they sell all year: selected cuts and special orders for commercial slaughter. They'll even give you recipes. It's a great start for their new career.

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dusk into dark, and then the moon rose over the poplar trees outside the window where Susanna and Sue were sleeping. The Shaker Brethren and Sisters were resting serenely after their day of confession. It was the aged Tabitha's last Sabbath on earth, but had she known, it would have made no difference; if ever a soul was ready for heaven, it was Tabitha's.

There was an Irish family at the foot of the long hill that lay between the Settlement and the village of Albion: father, mother, and children had prayed to the Virgin before they went to bed. And the gray-haired minister in the low-roofed parsonage was writing his communion sermon on a text sacred to the Orthodox Christian world. The same moon shone over all, and over millions of others worshipping strange idols and holding strange beliefs in strange far lands, yet none of them owned the whole of heaven; for as Elder Gray said, "It is a big place and belongs to God."

Susanna Hathaway went back to John thinking it her plain duty, and it seems to me beautiful that she found waiting for her at journey's end a new love that was better than the old...

Oh! It was beautiful, the autumn twilight, the smoke of her own hearth-side rising through the brick chimneys! She thought she had left the peace behind her, but no, the way of peace was here, where her duty was, and her husband and children.

The sea was deep blue; the home hills rolled softly along the horizon; the little gate that Susanna had closed behind her in anger and misery stood wide-open; shrubs, borders, young hedge-rows, beds of late autumn flowers greeted her eyes and touched her heart. A foot sounded on the threshold; the home door opened and smiled a greeting; and then a voice choked with feeling, glad with welcome, called her name.

Light-footed Sue ran with a cry of joy into her father's outstretched arms, and then leaping down darted to Ellen, chattering like a magpie. Husband and wife looked at each other for one quivering moment, and then clasped each other close.

"Forgive, O Susanna, forgive!"

John's eyes and lips and arms made mute appeals, and it was then Susanna said, "Never mind, John. Let's forget, and begin all over again!"



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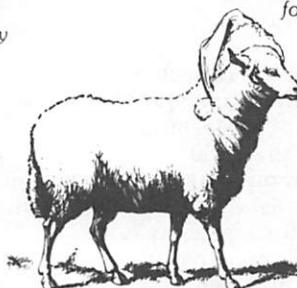
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Recollections of Life Down On The Farm

by Merton S. Parsons

BREAKING THE ROAD

Every winter one of our jobs was "breaking the road." This meant opening up the roads for travel after a snow storm, or sometimes just after a wind blow that piled up snow in the road. Each neighborhood was more or less responsible for its own roads, although the town paid for the work at moderate rates.

If the snowfall was not too heavy and if the drifts were not too deep, the job could be done mostly by the horses. We would hitch up two or sometimes four horses to the logging sleds and fasten a 4 x 4 about seven feet long in front of the rear sled. This would pack the snow and push some of it out of the way so that the result was a fairly good road for sleds and sleighs. We never used the car in winter, of course, until late in the twenties. Sometimes, and in some spots, the drifts would be four to eight feet deep and it was a question of shovelling. All the men of the community and most of the boys would go to work with shovels and slowly dig out a roadway perhaps seven feet wide. This was hard, slow work, and sometimes a crew of us would spend nearly a whole day on a stretch in front of the house—probably about 500 yards.

Another bad place was out at "The Corner" by the cemetery. Fortunately, most of the road had woods on both sides which prevented much drifting. Later, snow fence came into the picture and has been used for many years in bad spots to pile the snow up where it will not do harm nor blow back into the road.

Looking back at it, I can't see how we kept so happy in the winter with the constant threat of blocked roads and the more-or-less continuous job of keeping them open. Actually, I don't recall even being snowbound for more than two or three days at any one time, and in most winters I believe we could count on having roads open for sleighs and sleds at least 90 percent of the time.

I remember that during several winters the road at "The Corners" was entirely abandoned to the snow

I wouldn't want to go back to horse-and-buggy days, but on a moonlit winter night in snow country, a car can never quite take the place of a horse and sleigh. I can still hear the bells jingling and the kids singing.



and we used a woods-road which did not drift so much. The only trouble was the constant danger of meeting and trying to pass a big load of logs or pulp wood. The road was only wide enough for one team, and the turnabouts were few. Sometimes we would have to back up for quite a distance and I recall that once we broke a sleigh shaft in the process.

It was standard practice, of course, to stop at each turnabout and listen for bells approaching. But sometimes we forgot this, or maybe the other fellow was listening at exactly the same moment as we were.

A big change came along sometime in the twenties—probably about 1926, after I left for college. This big change was a tractor with a snow plow on the front which plowed the snow out of the roads. Along with this came the practice of driving cars all winter, even in the rural areas. This meant

the end of breaking roads with horses, and it also eliminated most of the hand shovelling. But at the same time it removed some of the glamour of the wintertime.

Car travel tended to ruin the roads for sleighing or sliding and for several years this was quite an issue between the reckless fools with autos and the diehards who stuck with horses. Finally the horse lost out, of course, and the present generation of kids in Maine can hardly tell a horse from a cow, to say nothing of knowing how to harness and drive a horse. I wouldn't want to go back to horse-and-buggy days, but on a moonlit winter night in snow country, a car can never quite take the place of a horse and sleigh. I can still hear the bells jingling and the kids singing.

WINTER SPORTS

The first event of the season was usually skating—sometimes on Thanksgiving Day. Then would come sliding, skiing, and snowshoeing as the snow came and got deeper. I suppose that sliding was our biggest winter sport, since it could be done all winter and required less skill than either skating or skiing.

The folks bought me a new sled when I was about 10—a long, low one with rounded steel runners. It was wonderful on a good hard surface, although not so good as flat runners on a soft snow or crust. Dad also made us a set of "bobs" which was a standard item then, consisting of two small sleds connected by a board 10-15 feet long. The front sled could be steered by a wheel or lever.

All the kids around had sleds of one kind or another, and we used to slide every spare minute when the weather permitted. The best sliding was generally in the roads after the snow had been packed down well by the horses and sleighs. Sometimes we would organize a neighborhood sliding party on a moonlit evening, usually on the aqueduct hill just east of the house, or on the schoolhouse hill. The older

Page 21...



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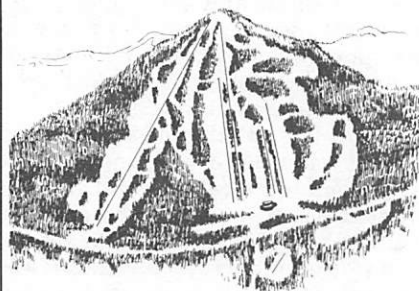
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*Photo Essay by
Jane Chandler &
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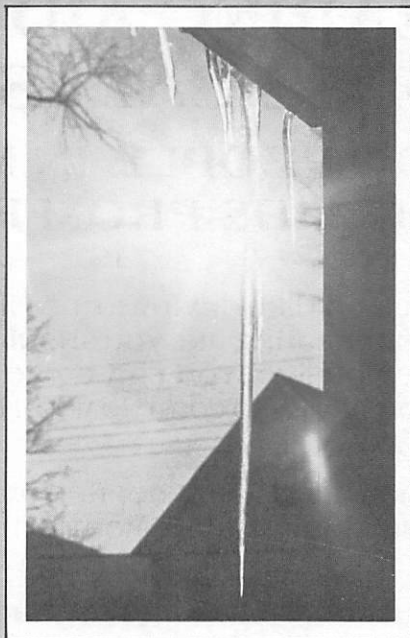


... an old stone wall covered
with snow ...

Winter Is...



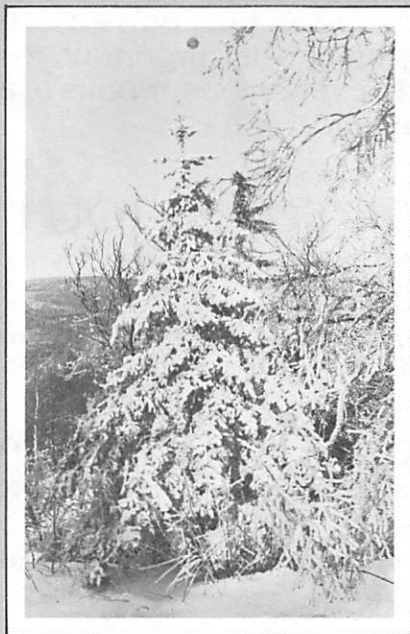
... patterns ...



... an icicle ...



... a playground at rest ...



... a Christmas tree waiting to be harvested ...

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... Page 17 Winter Sports

folks would often join us kids on the evening parties, although as we got older we didn't encourage that since it cramped our style a little in the mild courting that was always possible.

Once or twice every winter we had "crust" sledding—the result of a rain or thaw followed by freezing weather. Then all the fields would be covered with a hard, smooth face and sledding territory was unlimited. A favorite spot for crust sledding was the old 12-acre field on the southwest side of our farm next to the Cummings' place. The field had a nice long slope down into the Cummings field. Usually the snow was deep enough so we would slide right over the stone wall at the boundary, and many a Sunday afternoon we kids spent happily sliding down that slope and walking back. My friend Mid Cummings usually was there, and sometimes a few others from farther away. Our folks never approved of sliding on Sunday, but generally did nothing to prevent it if we got far enough from the house so they couldn't see or hear us. I guess they figured that peace around the house was more than enough to offset our sin at breaking the Sabbath, particularly if they weren't sure what we were doing.

I remember once on a good crust, Phil, Mid Cummings and I took the bobs and started down across the steep field below the upper end of the big field. We knew there was a barbed wire fence near the foot of the hill, but we thought we could stop before reaching it. The crust was very smooth and icy, however, and we were soon moving at terrific speed, and with that wire fence coming right at us. We dragged our feet but that had no effect on the icy crust. Finally, with disaster rather close, we turned sideways and tipped the bobs over, but we still kept on sliding, boys and bobs in a tangle, toward the fence. Finally, we hit it, but luckily we were all horizontal and went through the fence with nothing more serious than a few scratches plus some badly torn clothes and slightly damaged bobs. My best work pants were nearly ruined, but the folks were so glad to see us not seriously hurt that they never scolded us much about the property damage. Other kids were hurt badly in similar accidents, however, and some of them had obvious scars for life.

Another time I was in an accident that didn't turn out so well. It was the winter of 1924-25, I believe, when we were living with Uncle Wallace and Aunt Apphia near the south edge of town. On the way to school in the morning, a bunch of us got on as big bob sled owned by a neighborhood boy, and were sliding down Clark Hill. As we came over the top of the last pitch, we saw a load of logs sitting in the middle of the road at the bottom of the hill.

My first skis were an old pair I found up on the scaffold in the harness shed. Dad had made them by hand when he was a boy.

The driver, following standard practice, had put a bridle chain on one runner of his logging sled to hold the load back on the hill, and he was in the process of taking it off. We knew the danger at once, but we were going fast and were rather stunned by it. The boy who was steering, Kenneth Davis, tried to turn the bobs enough to slip by the load of logs, but a rut held us and we went smash into the rear of the load. Boys flew in all directions, but no one was badly hurt except Kenneth, who had internal injuries and a broken leg. Someone took him to Dr. Stewart, who in turn rushed him to the hospital in Lewiston. He died there within a day or two. That put a damper on our sliding for a while, particularly on that hill.

Skating was good sport, but not very dependable, since the ice was usually covered with too much snow. Only once in a while could we skate, either before the snow came, or during a thaw in the winter followed by a

freeze. But we had ice enough to learn to skate and to practice some every year. Learning to skate was a long, hard task for me, and I'm sure that Dad was disgusted at my slowness. He was a good skater and expected me to learn quickly. But I could not, and after many trials and much effort, was still very awkward. For some reason I could not learn to stroke with both feet, but could only push with one while the other did nothing but hold me up. This was a terrible way to skate, and I'm sure Dad was mortified to see his son so backward. But he still took me along and I kept trying, and one day it finally came to me. I could use both feet and was soon flashing around on the ice in a manner that pleased both Dad and myself. From then on I skated whenever it was possible, and I even learned to cut circles backwards.

The other major sport was skiing, and this we could do almost any time. My first skis were an old pair I found up on the scaffold in the harness shed. Dad made them by hand when he was a boy, but hadn't used them for years. They were not too bad, but had nothing to hold your feet except a narrow leather band which slipped over the instep of your shoe. Consequently, they were always getting away and arriving ahead of me. But we got along fairly well with such equipment, and spent many a Sunday afternoon walking up and skiing down the neighborhood hills. We even tried a little jumping, but never had the courage to go too far with that.

Finally, we had lots of fun in the winter just riding a sleigh pulled by a driving horse. Mostly this was going to and from school, but sometimes we would hitch up and tear around just for the fun of it. It was good sport on a clear, cold moonlit night to go sleigh riding on the country roads with the bells jingling. We would ride along singing, "Jingle Bells," "Seeing Nellie Home," and other songs—some not so appropriate, but all cheerful. On such cold nights the horse would feel good and want to go fast just to keep warm. Sometimes we had trouble keeping warm ourselves, but always had plenty of clothing plus a heavy laprobe, and often a hot soapstone.

The late Merton Parsons grew up in South Paris before moving to Virginia.

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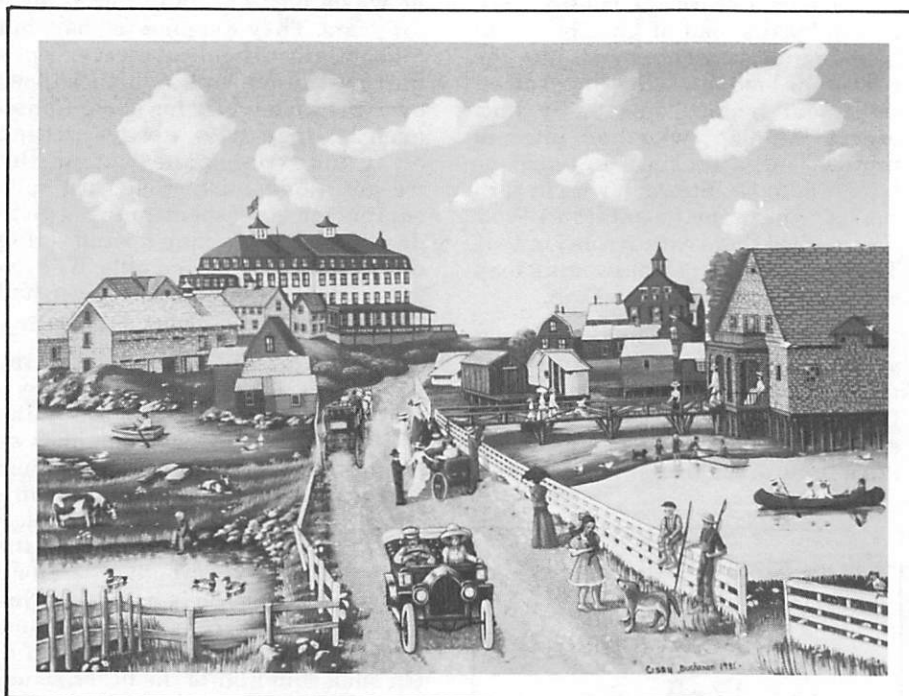
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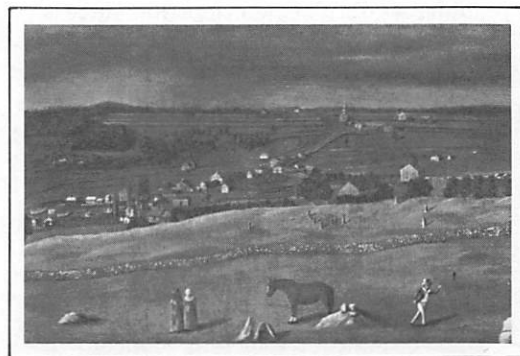


Cissy Buchanan's first primitive—view of Old Orchard Beach, sold to Jan Flaggler, Wisconsin

Below: Ocean Avenue, Kennebunkport, turn of the century—20 x 24 acrylic on masonite, Hobe Sound Galleries, Florida



Maine's native-born artist/poet Marsden Hartley described American primitive art as refreshing to the viewer: "... a bath of gentleness for the eye and mind ..." and giving no hint that "... art was ever meant to be anything but a simple visual pleasure, and not a mechanistic invention or a metaphysical debauch."



Jonathan Fisher

MAINES IN

A Kennebunk

CISSY BU

Labels in art can be misleading. Artist not simple in nature and can be surprising, for example, and Henri Rousseau were considered revealed delights as well as miseries of the

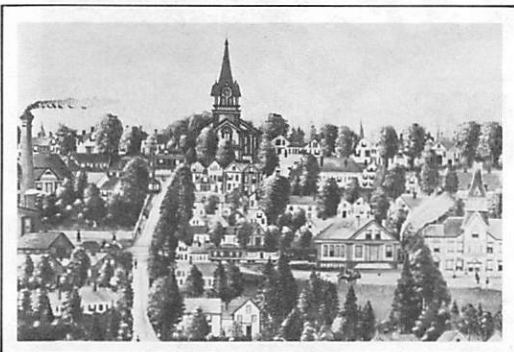
Unschooling artists, sometimes called *Sunday painters*, have produced in the emotionally moving works of art. In Maine, far-between, especially in the 20th century, *View of Bluehill* (1824) or G. J. Griffin's *View of Bluehill* are useful in introducing the contemporary

No other painter working or living in Maine has the rare quality that identifies authentic this unique art form. Working most often in the past decade has created a remarkable around Kennebunk, combining the joy of painting and sea, ripe fields and bluer-than-blue chasers. "How great to *be alive!*" they say.

Modest and hard-working, Buchanan has her long-neglected work begun to recover (including this issue of *BitterSweet*) in full color. Art galleries, important collections, begun to seek her out. It awes her but has Painting is an addiction she will never stop.

"Do you think," she worriedly asked and "Do that," he said, "and you'll never have

DIBNER



G. J. Griffin

DREAMS ART

Original . . .

CHAMAN

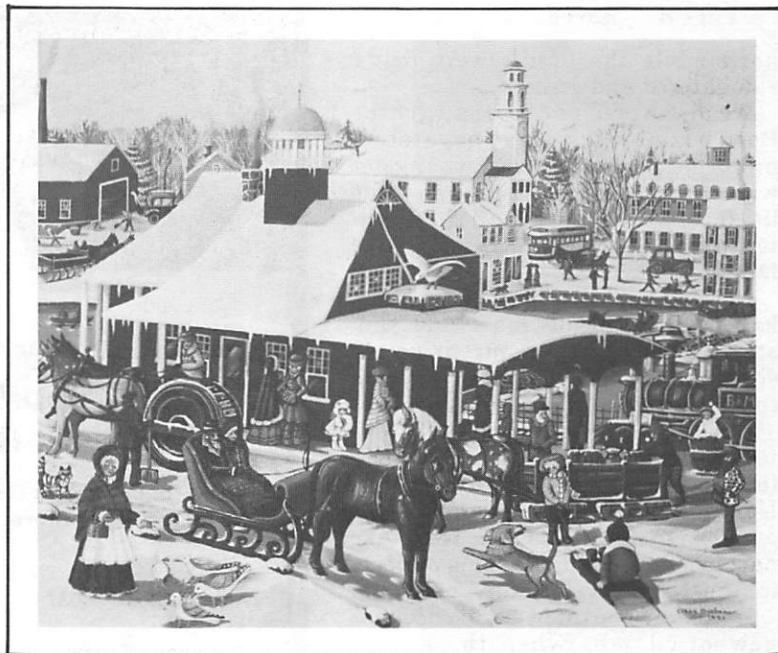
designated as *naïve* or *primitive* are often singly sophisticated. Paul Gauguin, for aplicated personalities whose paintings e human spirit.

instinctive painters or *neo-primitives* or most rudimentary style memorable and e, artists of this genre have been few and y. However, a look at Jonathan Fisher's *ew of Freeport, Maine* (1886)—see above—y primitive art of Cissy Buchanan.

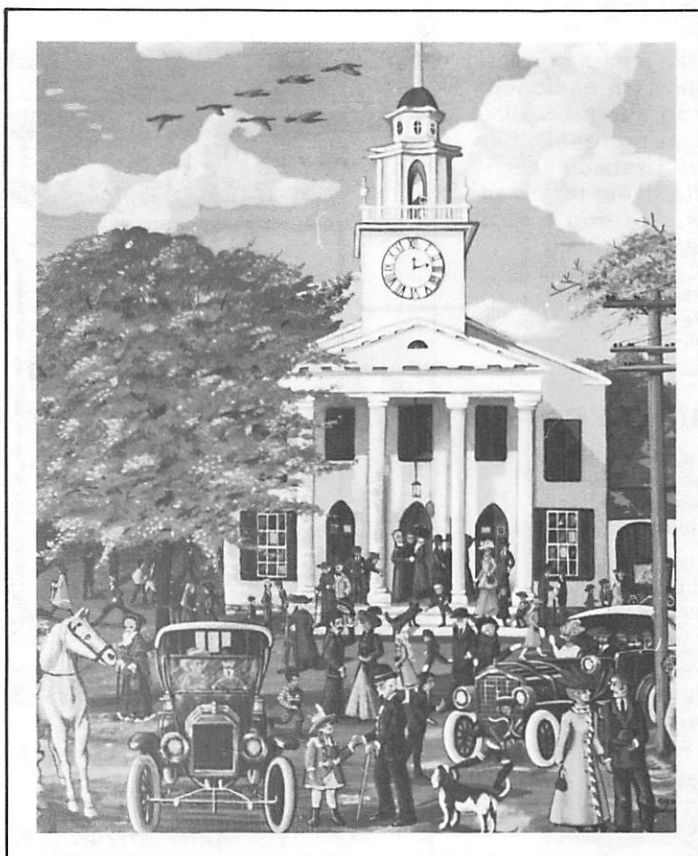
ne today so naturally evokes, as she does, aïve art from false or spurious concepts of ith acrylics on masonite, Buchanan over portfolio of her coastal Maine environment aily living with a nostalgia for times past. nics, church steeples, saucy boats in sand skies. The scenes are vivacious gloom-

n to say. s shunned publicity. Only in the past year eive the attention it deserves. Magazine nd *Down East* last April) feature her work tors, even a jigsaw puzzle company, have in no way changed her style or purpose. ke.

admirer, "I should study perspective?" r a kind word from me again."



Old railroad station, Kennebunkport, painting owned by Richard Littlefield & Bev Davis of Kennebunkport



South Congrega-
tional Church,
about 1913—16 x 20
acrylic on mason-
ite (available)

barn while the lambs were being slaughtered and dressed.

We discovered one reason why the Boston lamb market may have future problems. The little Greek youngster who shared our Easter dinner while her folks were busy in the barn admitted that she and her brother don't like lamb and never eat it!

But we do, subsisting on hamburgers, kabobs, chops, steaks, roasts and lamb stew. Besides being our principle source of protein, it's sheep who are the main source of our farm income.

But is it enough income? The lure of farming is that "next year will be better" creed by which all farmers live. Next year we'll breed earlier. We'll get our yarn to the mill sooner. We'll take part in some public relations projects touting the marvelous flavor of lamb.

We'll crawl out of bed and check for newborn lambs when the aurora borealis streaks bright fingers across the winter sky. We'll tote lamb stew to church suppers. We'll match wits with animals whose only ambition is access to the next field where the grass seems greener.

Raising sheep, like jogging or eating popcorn, becomes an addiction. We say we'll stay in sheep because next year will be more profitable. But we can't imagine not raising sheep. Their needs regulate all our farm and leisure activities. We don't own them—they own us.

Allison Williams is a writer in Alfred, Maine. She writes regularly for her local newspaper.

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The ARTIST paints a pretty picture,
His secret we shall never know ...
Leaves with color blended,
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And think of love to give.

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*Harold Beal
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HOLIDAY CAKES FROM VEGETABLES

by Beatrice Comas

As the holidays near, do you feel as though Father Time is breathing down your neck? Suddenly you realize you should be starting your search for those recipes—either “tried and true” or new—for desserts that you will be proud to bring to the festive table, or bake as food gifts. An edible greeting of the season is always welcome and if you can bake it somewhat in advance, so much the better.

This year why not break with tradition and instead of . . . or in addition to . . . the classic fruitcakes, bake a cake or cakes using some of those handy autumn/winter vegetables which you may already have in your bin.

For instance, carrot cake is as popular as ever. It stays moist, stores and packs well, as do several other equally delectable vegetable cakes. Many of them have more general appeal for modern appetites than the richer, heavier fruit cakes.



Citrus Zucchini Cake is handsome enough to warrant a place on the holiday table. A delicate white glaze covers the cake . . . a perfect background for imaginative decorating . . . perhaps shredded zucchini and slivered orange rind or pretty seasonal mixed candied fruit.

Citrus Zucchini Cake

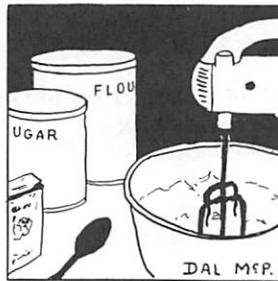
- 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 tablespoon grated orange rind
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 3 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 cup shredded zucchini

In large mixing bowl, cream butter, orange rind, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Blend into creamed mixture alternately with orange juice. Stir in zucchini. Turn into a greased 10-inch tube pan. Bake in a 350°F oven for 55-65 minutes, or until cake tester inserted in cake comes out clean. Cool 10 min. Remove from pan and cool completely. Spread top with White Glaze and garnish, if desired. Serves 12-16.

White Glaze

- 1-1/2 cups sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1 Tablespoon butter or margarine, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons milk

Beat all ingredients in bowl until smooth. Spread over cake. Garnish as desired.



Chocolate Fudge Tater Cake

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 cup grated raw potato
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
- 2-1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 squares (2 ounces) baking chocolate, melted
- Grated rind of 1 lemon

Cream butter or margarine and

sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks and potato, beating vigorously. Dredge nuts in small amount of flour. Sift together remaining flour and other dry ingredients. Add alternately with milk to creamed mixture. Beat vigorously. Add melted chocolate, lemon rind and nuts. Blend thoroughly. Carefully fold in egg whites which have been beaten stiff but not dry. Pour into greased and floured 13x9x2-inch pan. Bake in a 325°F oven 1 hour. If desired, frost with fudge, butter cream, or cream cheese frosting.

Butternut Squash Cake

- 3/4 cup shortening
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tablespoons molasses
- 3/4 cup cooked mashed squash
- 2-1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon each - nutmeg, cloves, and salt
- Chopped nuts (optional)

Cream shortening and sugar. Beat eggs and blend into creamed mixture. Sift dry ingredients together and blend into creamed mixture alternately with the squash into which you have stirred the molasses. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a greased and floured tube pan or 6x8-inch cake pan. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 35-40 min., or until cake tests done.

Presto Lemon-Glazed Pumpkin Cake

- 1 19-oz. package spice cake mix
1-3/4 cups mashed cooked pumpkin
(or 1 16-oz. can)
1/4 cup cooking oil
2 eggs
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1-1/2 cups unsifted confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
2 to 3 teaspoons lemon juice
Walnut halves (garnish)

In large bowl of mixer, combine mix, pumpkin, oil, and eggs. Beat at low speed 2 minutes, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Stir in raisins and chopped walnuts. Turn into greased 2- or 3-quart fluted tube pan. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven 40 to 50 minutes or until pick inserted in cake comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 min. Loosen edges with knife, and invert onto wire rack. Cool. Place on cake plate, bottom side up.

Combine until smooth: confectioners' sugar, lemon peel, and enough lemon juice for glaze consistency. Drizzle on cake. Garnish with walnut halves. Cake may be baked in a greased 13x9x2-inch pan for 30 minutes or until pick inserted in center comes out clean. Instead of lemon icing, cake may be served with sweetened whipped cream or whipped topping. Garnish with chopped walnuts.

How Sweet It Is Potato Cake

- 1-1/2 cups sifted flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup shortening
2 eggs, well beaten
2 cups hot mashed sweet potatoes
3/4 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon nutmeg or cinnamon



YANKEE FOOD

I like to cook
Three times a day
Variety is the spice
Of life, they say!

What is this t.v. food
That cooks prepare?
I prefer my good
Old-fashioned fare.

Why eat mixes when
You don't know what it means?
Good old Yankee food is best:
Clam chowder, corn, and beans.

Strawberry, rhubarb, blueberry, mince,
Pineapple, custard, pumpkin pie.
Lobsters also—I just sigh—
For I want good old Yankee food—
And PIE! PIE! PIE!

Mollie Burrows
Casco, Maine

- 1/2 cup milk
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Sift flour and baking powder together. Add shortening and beaten eggs to potatoes while still hot. Add sugar, salt, and nutmeg. Beat thoroughly. Add flour and milk alternately in small amounts, beating well after each addition. Add lemon juice. Pour into an 8x4-inch greased loaf pan and bake at 325°F for 1 hour.

Mashed Potato Pound Cake

- 1 cup shortening
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
3/4 cup milk
3 cups flour

- 1/2 cup cocoa
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup chopped nuts
1 cup hot mashed potato

Cream the shortening, sugar and eggs together. Add the milk alternately with the sifted dry ingredients, and beat well. Add vanilla, nuts and potato, mixing well. Pour into a greased and floured 10-inch tube pan or a 9x13-inch baking pan. Bake at 350°F for approximately 1 hour for the tube pan or 40-45 minutes for the flat pan.

Carrot Cake or Pudding

- 1-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup firmly-packed brown sugar
1 cup shredded carrots
3/4 cup raisins
1/2 cup butter or margarine,
softened
1/2 cup orange juice
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon each cloves and salt

Heat oven to 325°F. In largest mixer bowl, beat all cake ingredients at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 1 or 2 minutes. Pour into greased 8-inch square cake pan and bake for 20-25 minutes or until cake begins to pull away from sides of pan. Cool upright in pan for 5 min. Remove from pan and frost with Butter Cream or Cream Cheese Frosting.

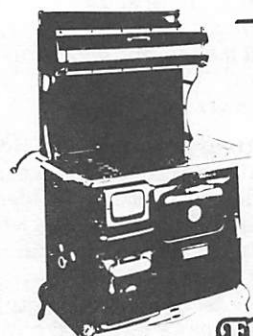
To serve as pudding: pour batter in greased 6-cup cake mold. Bake for 35-45 minutes or until it begins to pull away from sides of pan. Serves 12.

Old-Fashioned Vanilla Sauce

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
1/3 cup sugar
3 Tablespoons cornstarch
1-1/2 cups water
1 Tablespoon vanilla

In saucepan, melt butter or margarine over medium heat. Stir in sugar and cornstarch. Add remaining ingredients. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce comes to full boil, 5 to 7 minutes. Boil 1 minute. Pour one-third of sauce over the cake. Serve additional warm sauce with cake. (Makes 2 cups.)

Mrs. Comas lives in Portland.



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Folk Tales

Rubira Sharon Crockett Making Music From Maine to Oregon

At five years of age, Rubira Sharon began singing in public; she sang in church choirs and for many gatherings around her home town of Norway, Maine. At the age of twelve, she started to study the piano—and was teaching it by the time she was sixteen.

She played for minstrel shows in the Norway Opera House; she played in orchestras in many local towns—including for Howard Shaw's Orchestra. (See *BitterSweet*, April, 1980.) She taught music in schools, and over the years has directed choruses, glee clubs, and choirs in many states.

Today, Rubira and her husband, Richard Crockett, formerly of South Paris, live in Portland, Oregon, where he retired after a career of designing roads, bridges, and turnpikes from Maine to Florida. Nearby, in Beaverton, Oregon, are their two daughters—Joyce, a journalist, and Sally, a businesswoman—and their four grandchildren.

Mrs. Crockett is now teaching piano and directing choirs where they live (not far from the frightening Mt. St. Helens). She says the west is beautiful but the mountains are too high; and she wishes she were back in the nice town of Norway where she was born and brought up, and is fondly remembered.

*Mrs. R. Morgon
Portland, Oregon*

J. Berton Emery The Rawleigh Man

J. Berton Emery started out his youthful life with a veterinarian's diploma in hand, but soon decided to change horses in mid-stream and pursue another career.

"A veterinarian's practice was so different in the early 1900's than it is now," he comments. "Then it was a matter of filing horses' teeth, tending to hooves and supplying salves and ointments. Today's sophisticated medications and surgery for animals were not even dreamed of then."

In 1917 Emery purchased a team of mules—as clever as any horse, he says. In 1920, young, single and ambitious, he acquired a medicine wagon, stocked it with sixty different Rawleigh products, and ventured into the

business world. He, his mules and his medicine wagon left Waterboro in York County and travelled one hundred miles to establish a house-to-house route. Twice a year he would return home (especially at Christmas).

He found that another, similar business was well established in the area; but, not one to be deterred, he left each family upon whom he called two or three dollars' worth of his merchandise, to try and compare with the products they had been using. Within a year he had established a good, profitable business and enjoyed the friendship of the people he called on. Knowing about animals, doubtless pointing out some of the liniments and salves and offering a word of advice probably didn't hurt, either.

As time went by, he built up an established route—leaving home on Monday morning and returning on Friday. Through the week he often stopped at friendly farmsteads. If he ate dinner, he paid fifty cents a meal. If he stayed overnight, he paid two dollars for lodging for himself and his mule. (Grain was his responsibility.)

Ever mindful of keeping his customers happy, he started his own policy of refunds. If a customer were not more than satisfied with a Rawleigh product (be it vanilla, liniment, or anything else), if there was a half-bottle remaining, Emery would take it back and refund the total buying price. At that time he made 25¢ profit



J. Berton Emery

on a sale; the refund came out of his own pocket. It has since become a policy of the Rawleigh company.

After two years, with his business prospering, he courted and married Nina Shortridge of West Paris. They lived in West Paris for a year, then bought a house in Peru in 1923. Their family started with a double blessing: twins Berton and Bertha. In due time, Ronald, and then Edith were also born.

In his early years as a salesman (never a peddler!) he would occasionally pay for a Rawleigh product himself and then barter it for eggs or farm produce for his own use.

During mud season, his route from Rumford to Lewiston was mud country; for that period of the year he would leave his mules in Buckfield and take the train to "sell the mud roads." He kept his mule team until 1934, but in 1927 he bought a Chevrolet automobile for a bit more than \$500. After obtaining this sophisticated vehicle, he went on to purchase attachments manufactured (as he remembers it) in Ossipee, N.H., which converted the Chevrolet into a mudmobile (with flanges like manure spreader wheels that bolted onto the rear end) or a snowmobile (with the addition of skis). The mules were partially retired, but for years they pulled many an automobile out of the mud near Emery's home.

There were very few of these converted automobiles around; Dr. Heald



Rubira Sharon Crockett

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and Dr. Atwood of Buckfield had them for their errands of mercy and Jerry Russell used one to deliver *The Lewiston Daily Sun* to drop-off points in various locations. "They tipped over easily," comments Emery, "and we expected too much of them. We ran them out across fields and other like places. On a mushy day, the wheels would turn, but the thing would slide sideways."

Ever alert to make a dollar, Emery found his travels put him in the perfect position to have a sideline in real estate. Over the years he has bought and sold lots all over western Maine.

In August of 1980, at the age of 82, J. Berton Emery completed sixty years of association with the Rawleigh company; during which he met all the Rawleighs personally, and was promoted from distributor to Rawleigh Executive Distributor with 25-35 people working for him. He still does his old route—covering Peru, Dixfield, Rumford, Woodstock, Sumner, Hartford, Canton, Buckfield, and Hebron—in partnership with the twins. "I am," he chuckles, "quicken up in my old age. I used to work from eight o'clock in the morning until dark and travel my route about once every three months. Now at three or four o'clock in the afternoon I'm looking towards home and I go about once in two months."

With gasoline the way it is now, he believes people may someday not be able to have the service they've had for the past sixty years. Rawleigh is now trying home parties.

Within recent years he lost his home by fire, and he regrets the loss of many old photographs from his past; but nevertheless, he still enters a customer's house with a cheery smile and the time to sit and chat—always interspersing his conversations with allusions to his product.

"I know of no more healthy and enjoyable life than this," he says, "and most of all is friendship. If anyone has a long face and can't be jolly . . . well, good clean fun is good for anybody. That's the biggest part of life."

"If I had it to do over again, starting with a veterinarian's diploma, I would do the same thing. I have never wished to swap jobs with anybody—even the governor of the state!"

*Alice Parks
Buckfield*

Clifton Bickford Gifts For Bryant Pond

*This is the day the Lord hath made;
I will rejoice and be glad in it.*

If ever a man took that statement for his motto, it was Clifton Bickford. I never heard just why he chose Oxford County for retirement after years of teaching in Rhode Island, but this area proved to be the ideal place for Clifton to express his love of life and of his Maker as well as joy in his several talents.

Of his various abilities, music was the foremost. He especially liked the classics and reveled in playing the organ. The first time I ever heard "How Great Thou Art," was when Clifton played this popular hymn on his own living room organ while his wife Winona was preparing dinner for my husband and me. Rarely do I ever hear this inspiring piece without thinking of him. He delighted in both the rendering of it and the meaning of its words. He gave generously of his services whenever there was a need at the Bryant Pond Baptist Church, often playing the piano, too.

There Clifton served for several years as deacon. However, when a new hot-air furnace was needed to replace the wood burner at the church, he did not hesitate to crawl under the floor to help install the pipes; he was always willing to aid with any job of a similar nature that needed to be done.

Nearly all of us collect something. With Clifton, perhaps it was people. His pastor, Linwood Hanson, says it best: "A man his friends will never forget, he always had time to listen to others and genuinely wanted to help whenever possible. Too, he was able to tell hilarious stories of events many years in the past. He was able to meet new people and then be on a first-name basis with them in minutes. I never saw anyone like Clifton with such ability..."

Among his favorite hobbies was gardening. Here another side of his nature found expression. The Bickfords raised both vegetables and flowers each year; their tuberous rooted begonias were the most beautiful I've ever seen. Now that we are told how plants respond to attention and love, there is nothing surprising about the expansiveness of those begonias. Rarely was a visitor allowed to depart from the Bickford home without being given "a few samples" from the good

earth, whether flowers or vegetables.

In the early days of the Earth Station at Andover (then a single "horn" antenna owned by A.T. & T. and called Bell System's TELSTAR), one of Clifton's ways of entertaining his friends was to drive them to Andover and introduce them to this great international control center. "Each time I come up here," he grinned, "perhaps I gain a teeny bit more in understanding what it's all about."

When winter descended on Bryant Pond, two great interests absorbed his love and attention. For one, Clifton had a unique method of rug making. After planning out and drawing his own design, he sewed his pattern on with a very large needle and yarn of brilliant colors. He called these rugs "Americal Oriental"—and, indeed, the beautiful effect *was* oriental. Fortunate are his loving friends who now own these rugs.

Another hobby was painting. He worked predominately in watercolors (although he was known to have done a few canvases in oil). Generously sharing this talent, he taught a few pupils at his home from time to time. During these so-called retirement years, he also did a lot of artwork with children at his church—especially at Christmas.

Many were the beneficiaries of Clifton Bickford's gifts, not the least of these being the students at the Christian School at Glen Cove. In addition to giving a number of his paintings to friends in and around Bryant Pond, he donated a number of his works to that institution. For several years they hung in the halls there.

Now that the school has been sold, the Bickford watercolors are in private hands, so his work continues to bring pleasure to many. And although

Winona and Clifton are no longer with us, his many skills continue to inspire and act as his memorial.

*Hilma Barrett
Ocean Park*

SNOWFLAKE REVERIE

Come, let's take a sleigh ride,
Like those of long ago,
With horses prancing merrily,
Amid softly falling snow.

As we ride along together,
In rich softness we are clad,
Surrounded by old-fashioned warmth
In folds of tartan plaid.

While before us chestnut horses
Pull ahead in merry trot,
Full of vim and vigor,
Giving everything they've got.

The night takes on a special glow,
As moonlight glistens on the snow,
And shafts of moonlight filter down,
Leaving a soft mist all around.

The snow's a show of varying hues,
Of crystal whites and silver blues,
When suddenly it starts to snow,
And crisp cold winds around us blow.

Our lungs are filled with frosty air,
As snowflakes flitter here and there,
And as each snowflake flutters down,
A fluffy carpet is laid on the ground.

Enchanted with our world of white,
We disappear into the night,
Through the woods, the fields we roam.
Over silvery paths toward home.

Often times on wintry evenings,
When we're safe and warm inside,
And outside in the deep Maine woods,
Snow has drifted far and wide,

I look outside my window, and
As I watch the falling snow,
Once more I'm on a sleigh ride
Like those of long ago.

*Dorothy N. Gross
Oxford*

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YESTERDAY IN MAINE: A NEW OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

My sister telephoned me from Florida this morning. "I just bought a genuine Maine Christmas tree," she announced. "We're going to have a real old-fashioned Christmas this year. Do you suppose you could send me some bayberry candles? I can't seem to find any in the stores here. You know, I think the smell of this tree has made me homesick."

Shopping later that day, I stopped at a local garden and craft shop to purchase the requested candles. As I started back to my car, the carillon at the Baptist Church on Main Street chimed the inspiring Westminster Carol. Surrounded by rows of freshly cut Maine evergreens, I breathed in their intoxicating aroma and allowed smells and sounds to revive another Christmas in another town.

Christmas in our family was always a special event composed of revelry and relatives and absolute devotion to ritual. With the influx of kin, the walls stretched to their elastic limit as we prepared to wring every drop of pleasure from the festivities. Down through the years most Christmases have melded together into a blur of crumpled wrapping paper and candle-lit church services, but Christmas 1958 was unique because it was the last one our five-generation family shared together. I was twelve that year; too old to believe in Santa Claus, too young not to wish the funny little fat man in the red suit was real.

It was a peppermint winter, all sharp and crisp and white. Snow lay in drifts three or four feet deep, and in the orchard the gnarled apple branches shimmered in icy arctic varnish. Every door of our 200-year-old Dutch Colonial bloomed with sprays of pine and juniper held captive by red velvet bows. From every window ivory candles flickered welcome to the approaching holiday. Oh, it was a grand duchess of a house decked out in its Christmas finery!

From the kitchen the pungent aroma of mince pie mingled with the spicy scent of oyster dressing, while in the dining room bayberry candles dripped scented green wax onto the side-board that had been in my mother's family for six generations. Upstairs in the living room an eight-foot evergreen my father had recently

cut from the family woodlot on Mollycoddett displayed the ornaments of all our Christmases past. At its top was the lighted star my parents had bought for their first Christmas tree 30 years before. And scattered among the glass decorations and plastic icicles were the handmade ornaments: a silver paper disc tied with a faded green ribbon—Merry Christmas 1936, Love Bobby—my brother's first-grade effort; a group of glitter-coated pine cones strung together with red yarn by my sister in her Girl Scout days; and my contribution: a seemingly endless paper chain that grew longer each year as I replaced broken links and added new ones, dating each new link for some reason I still don't understand.

Each child's gift of love occupied a place of honor on the tree while under the tree lay mounds of packages, some in gaily colored wrapping paper; others in white tissue paper tied up with red or green ribbon. One package artfully concealed a red plaid hunting shirt bought for Dad at L. L. Bean's; another held silverware for my soon-to-be-married sister; and yet another contained a volume of Longfellow's poems my grandmother had selected for me. It was Christmas magic as it had always been—world without end, Amen. And from its place on the wall, the Banjo clock surveyed the scene below and unrelentingly ticked away the minutes.

Wrapped in this holiday setting were all the aunts and cousins, uncles and grandchildren of our multi-generational family. Each relative added his own personality to the event; but none left the occasion so indelibly stamped as our oldest members. Old Gentleman, my father's grandfather, was a scripture-quoting soothsayer capable of spreading more gloom than Poe's *Raven*. A white-bearded, short-tempered nonagenarian, he had razor-sharp memories of South Paris life during the Civil War years, memories he shared with anyone who

Christmas

would listen. Yet every Christmas Eve when Old Gentleman took his place by the fire, opened the massive Benson family Bible and guided us across the cold desert sand to the stable in Bethlehem, there was a genuine pleasure in his dry, cracked voice. It was the only time, to our knowledge, he ever found anything joyous in scripture.

But if Old Gentleman was doleful and sedentary, my maternal grandmother was his exact opposite. Nan, the family matriarch, was English from the tips of her snowy curls to the military laces of her servicable brown oxfords, and the Christmas holiday embodied all the pomp and circumstance she could muster. It was her self-imposed duty to see that there was a dime in the toe of each child's Christmas stocking; that there were enough raisins to insure the plumpest of plum puddings; and that her Aunt Julia's Irish linen cloth was draped over the dining room table with becoming ceremony. Clothed in a nondescript house dress under an enormous white apron, Nan propelled herself from room to room barking royal edicts and bandishing her scepter—for this occasion her favorite wooden spoon. Two generations of her grandchildren scrambled out of her path while her daughter, my mother, calmly looked on with the cool detachment of one long used to such zealous displays. And all this was done to the gentle strains of the Westminster Carol Nana incessantly hummed and the elusive scent of Yardley's Olde English Lavender she left in her wake.

Precisely at one o'clock, seated at the heavily laden table, our hearts as full as any Wassail bowl, we joined hands as Old Gentleman asked God's blessing: "Bless this food to our use and us to thy service and may we all be together again next Christmas. Thy will be done, Amen."

After dinner, although the wind howled and the temperature

Memories

plummeted to 15 below, friends came to pay their customary Christmas calls. Safe inside, ensconced in the family circle, a fire no wind could extinguish warmed us. It was a Charles Dickens Christmas and God had blessed us, every one.

We were never to have our wish about that next Christmas, however. In April, eight months short of his 100th birthday, Old Gentleman slept peacefully away; and the June roses had scarcely withered when Nan, too, answering the only call mightier than her own, passed out of her sight.

We live in a new house now, and a whole new generation of grandchildren has been added. My Dad can't climb Mollycodd mountain any more, so we buy our Christmas tree just as my sister did. Like us, our handcrafted ornaments are a little worse for wear, but they still occupy their customary place of honor. It wouldn't be Christmas without them. Though Nana and Old Gentleman are no longer in our midst, they are still very much with us. The Bible to which Old Gentleman was so very devoted graces my bookcase; and each Christmas Eve I take it from the shelf, seat myself by the fire, and retrace the ancient journey of love to Bethlehem.

There is no lavender scent to Christmas present, but Nana's wooden spoon is in my kitchen and her hand guides mine as I count out raisins for Plum Pudding. Shiny new dimes are tucked into the toe of each Christmas stocking by my mother, and the tablecloth, hand-embroidered by Julia Cross a century ago, adorns our table as we join hands and ask God's blessing for the coming year. Out of Christmas past comes Old Gentleman's voice, clear and firm: "Bless this food to our use and us to thy service and may we all be together again next Christmas. Thy will be done. Amen."

Francine B. Tanguay
Wells

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

When I was very young, my father owned and operated a Western Auto store in Rumford. I remember my many visits to his store and looking at all the compartments of nuts, bolts, nails, and screws. It amazed me how he kept everything in such neat order. The cash register fascinated me with its noisy clang, the numbers popping up, and the cash drawer rolling out. A large nail with the point sticking up stood next to the cash register and I always wondered why Dad stuck pieces of paper on it.



Drawing by Richard Gerdes

Even though it was during World War II and goods were hard to come by, before Christmas Dad's store was filled with as many toys, wagons, tricycles, teddy bears, and dolls of all sizes that he was able to obtain.

One Christmas I had my eye on a large baby doll with brown eyes that opened and closed. She wore a light pink dress and bonnet and white socks and shoes that tied. Quietly she lay in a box covered with cellophane on the bottom shelf in the display rack. Each time I went into the store I looked at her longingly and told Daddy that's what I wanted for Christmas. His answer was always, "Well, we'll see."

As Christmas approached my heart sank each time I saw my longed-for doll still in its box on the shelf. I thought by now Daddy would

have taken it off the shelf and wrapped it up for me. On the other hand, I was grateful he hadn't sold it to someone else and that it was still available. I also hoped he would not forget which doll I wanted.

The night before Christmas I pinned my father's big gray wool hunting sock with a red stripe at the top to the back cushion of the living room chair. On the table next to the chair I left two cookies and a small glass of milk, thinking Santa would like a snack.

Christmas morning I rushed downstairs and found the empty plate and glass and my bulging stocking. It was the custom in our house to empty our stockings when everyone was up and we had to wait until after breakfast to open our presents. I could always count on finding a grapefruit, an orange, a red apple, and a few coins jingling in the toe of the stocking.

Our Christmas breakfast was no surprise, either. Each year it consisted of half a grapefruit with a maraschino cherry in the center and hot oatmeal.

With breakfast eaten and the dishes cleared away, it was time to open gifts. In the back of the tree against the wall was the shape of the box I was looking for. The card on the package read, "To Marjorie from Santa." I recognized my father's handwriting and eagerly opened the package to find my much-wanted doll. Dad had remembered after all! To my delight, she even cried "Mama" when I laid her down.

It has been almost forty years since I opened this special gift of thoughtfulness from my father and I still treasure this doll named Susan. She has brought me many hours of happiness and has had more than a few mishaps. Dad wired her head onto her cloth body many times and put her eyes back in place when they had been poked out. Today her cry box is silent, her color has faded, and the nape of her neck has a small wound which has never healed.

Holiday traditions have not changed much in my own home today. In fact I'm looking forward to the grapefruit with a red cherry on top and a big bowl of steaming oatmeal on Christmas morning.

Marjorie Blick Gerdes
North Platte, Nebraska

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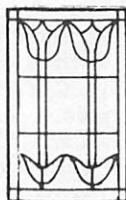
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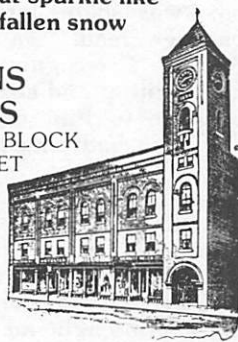
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DECEMBER, 1981

It wasn't until I shut the door behind Ken and turned to load the wood stove that I became aware of the forces of the wind, and felt a chill at being alone. Our cabin seemed an oasis among the immense white pines surrounding it, nestled in the womb of the Bryant Pond woods, and had brimmed with warmth and security until then. My car was away for repairs, the crank telephone was not yet connected, and the nearest neighbor was a mile away. I was alone with the sounds of my young son's breathing, the whining December wind, and a quickening pound in my chest.

But I'd heard wind before, I assured myself, and this cabin had stood for many Maine winters. Still, the howling nagged me. I climbed into the sleeping loft, read for a spell to calm my nerves, and finally turned off the light. My son's most recent painting fluttered on the wall where it hung; the wind was forcing its way through the north side of the cabin. The howl grew louder. I began to feel cold. Two hours crept by and I found myself downstairs in the rocking chair, reading old newspapers and stoking the stove's ravenous fire every half hour. Suddenly, I became aware of a different noise. The majestic white pines were bending like old men, and their creaking rivaled the screech of the wind. My breath stuck in my throat as I realized what was about to happen.

They began to fall, with a slow, deliberate force that I shall never forget. They tore the earth as their shallow roots slowed their descent. The cozy warmth of the cabin was swept away by the icy gale and its security transfigured into danger. I could see them falling from the bay window, their shadows bowing to the dark night. As I had feared, one hit the roof of the cabin, and the house seemed to buckle beneath its enormous weight. The electricity failed. I lit a candle, which flickered desperately, daring to stay alight. I wanted my son with me. I woke him from a sound sleep and we sat in the rocking chair, singing, chanting, trembling, storytelling, talking, always talking, jabbering away to somehow stave off the terror. The remotest of the Catholic prayers returned from my childhood memory that night, as did the fears that a child has in her room alone when familiar surroundings are dia-

bolically transformed into horrible shadows by the powers of darkness. About every fifteen minutes, a tree smashed upon the cabin and I felt that we were being buried in limbs and needles, suffocated by the same Nature that had always been maternal. The rooms grew colder and colder.

One pine hit the chimney with such power that it ripped part of the structure away and the cabin filled with smoke from the frenzied fire. I threw water into the stove and tore open all of the windows and doors. I bundled myself and my son in all that we could possibly wear—layers of pants and shirts, coats, mittens, blankets and hats. The nightmare had continued for three hours, and I was hit by the certainty that we would die.

I had been through crises before, and had known the energy one feels from pumping adrenaline. But I'd never known helplessness; that was new. Events were out of my control. Nothing earthly could protect me. Neither my intellect nor my strength were of any use. Again the image of a child came to mind—the helplessness of a baby in its cradle, a complete and pure surrender to the elements. I was more petrified to leave than to stay. We huddled under the stairway and listened to the creaking wood outside, the slow fall of tons of ancient trees.

I laughed aloud at the thought of such an end to our young lives. I'd never heard or read of anyone having their home crushed by falling trees. At least it was dramatic.

There was another moment, as strong as the earlier fear of death, when I was certain that we would escape this bizarre destruction. The complexion of the scene changed. I don't know if the wind began to die or not, but something settled in me, something else was lifted, and I felt a sudden warmth. I stopped trembling and we sat quietly, waiting for morning to break, allowing us to see our way to crawl from the wreckage and seek help. I even blew the candle out, not afraid of the darkness. Slowly, the sun shed light on the cabin, and we saw the mass of tangled trees pressed tightly against the windows and open doorway. I took my son and the hand saw into my arms, cleared a passage through the maze of limbs, snow and needles, staggered to Route 232 and hitchhiked to warmth and friends.

Lisa Durso
 South Windham

TREASURE-COLLECTING



Vast treasures of mineral wealth are still hidden in the ledges of the Oxford Hills. In the years to come, these mineral deposits will be uncovered one by one. Are you curious enough to seek this important part of our heritage?

by Jane Perham

If you fall prey to the unique minerals found in the Oxford Hills, you might find your hobby growing. (See Sept. **BitterSweet** for tools and locations.) A black light (ultra-violet) makes it possible to collect fluorescent minerals and you may find yourself searching for them some warm summer night.

If the winter drags on, you may find yourself exploring the world of the lapidary—the cutting of beautiful gems from material found last summer. From there, the next step is to learn to make jewelry yourself with the stones you cut. There are many spokes extending from the hub of mineral collecting and they're all fascinating to explore.

But suppose you merely want to collect specimens of various quarries and locations. It's important then to keep specimens in neat order and out of harm's way, for careless handling will result in broken crystal and shattered fragments. It's best to find a suitable container for your minerals.

Until you think of something more suitable, an egg carton works well for small specimens. Collectors often write the name of the specimen and the location where it was found on a sheet of paper which, cut to size, can be glued on the inside of the cover.

Eventually, your collection will be stored to your personal preference. Larger specimens are difficult to handle and require sturdy shelves for safe storage. Specimens the size of a basketball are lovely, but bear in mind the storage space you have available before bringing one home.

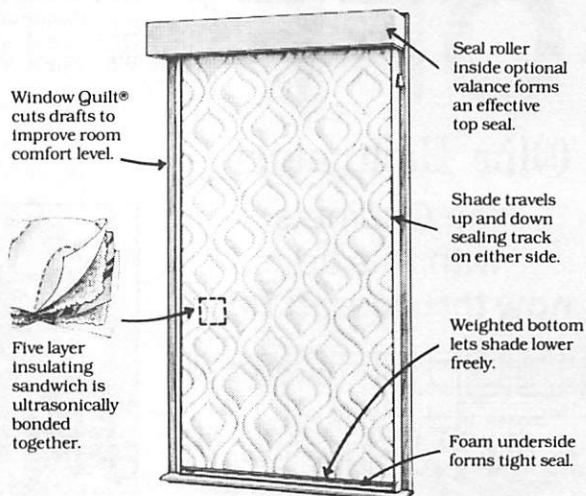
No specimen—no matter how good the quality—is important without a label showing the name of the mineral and the location where it was found. This is valuable information for your own use and, even more important, if you wish to trade or sell the specimen in the future. Believe it or not, the labels from collections of known collectors in the mineralogy field have sometimes become valuable themselves!

There are many books written about specimen identification, and they contain valuable information for the individual collector. Experience so comes quickly. You're likely to be surprised at just how much information you absorb after only a few jaunts. There is also a state association of mineral collectors.

We do live in an area which produces unique and colorful minerals. We each have the ability to explore them further.

Jane Perham has written a book on gems and minerals and can be found at Perham's Maine Mineral Store, Rt. 26, West Paris.

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THE RED SLED

Down hills of reverie, I coast
As a child on a Christmas sled
Sliding through swiftness of splendor
Toward miracles on ahead.

Out from the midnight of man
Into the dawn of a boy
White with the light of a star,
Radiant with rapture and joy;

Song of a bright red Christmas sled
Symphonious with the snow,
Downward, and upward, and over
Where only a child can go.

*Loton Rogers Pitts
Naples*



Loton



Pat

THE POETS PICTURED ABOVE:

Loton Rogers Pitts was the postmaster of Naples, Maine, from 1934-1957, and taught school from 1958-1967. A graduate of Bridgton Academy and Bates College, he has had poems published in The New York Times, Saturday Evening Post, and other publications; as well as in three books: Wild Mad Acres, pub. 1939; Anthology of Bates Verse; and Hoofbeats in the Sod, from the Indiana Federation of Poetry.

Pat White Gorrie, once a resident of Pennsylvania, has lived in Otisfield, Maine, for a number of years. A freelance writer, she has contributed often to BitterSweet and has two books being considered for publication at the present time: River Stones (featured in Oct. BitterSweet) and a children's tale. Mother of five, she lives with her two youngest sons, Jonathan and Chris.

THE FARMER'S WIFE

In her cold kitchen
she contemplates Time
as her tea cools.

Longing for her brushes,
her artist's hands
dry as sticks,
gather kindling.

Hurrying through days
she calls, "Wait for me!"
"Wait for me!"
as her unborn paintings
disappear
over
the
hill.

The artist
in the sheep shed
paints her life
without a brush—
sees it float
through the open door
and blow away.

*Pat White Gorrie
Otisfield*

MAINE WINTER

Brilliant days and starlit climes
And winter's crystal hue
Along with blues of fabled skies
And glories not a few—
Of such is Maine's clean thrust this year,
A bold, refulgent scene,
The very heart and soul of man
At great pains to redeem.

*Larry Billings
Bryant Pond*

BED FELLOWS

Were lions and tigers sleeping
in your bed?
And hardly room for other things, or you?
Let me explain just what I had to do
So each of us could rest our sleepy head.
It wasn't that they took up so much space.
My bed was big; I was the only child
Who knelt and said his prayers
so meek and mild,
Then hopped abed with bears and dogs
in place.
My mother said she didn't mind at all
Who slept with me. One skunk, a goat,
a sheep,
Giraffe, three bears, Joe Monkey
fell asleep
Faster than counting time from clock
to hall.
Bed full of friends, loved as dear brothers,
I lay still as midnight, like the others.

*Sara Bridges Graves
Saco*

Potpourri

Gardening Tips by Margaret Harriman

DECEMBER

With the approach of cold, shivery winter comes the thoughts of holidays, loved ones, and festivities; tracking through the snow to gather boughs for Christmas wreaths and roping; and time to find the perfect tree.

Wreaths can be made from most any kind of fir: pine, hemlock, cedar or ground evergreen—sometimes mistakenly called princess pine. We often make them with a combination of greens for a soft, fragrant wreath. Roping is made from the same kinds of greens, using short pieces, spool wire, and a length of baling twine, rope, or what-have-you. Place the greens on the rope, wind with wire, and continue with greens down the length of the rope. This is sort of like wreath making, not too hard to do and ever so lovely around a light pole, up and over the entry way to your home, or across the front with a string of lights. We use it inside, in unheated areas away from the stoves, up the stairway, etc. The aroma is delicious.

So many of us receive lovely plants as Christmas gifts and then wonder how to care for them. Most will need to be fertilized every few weeks as they soon exhaust the nutrients in the soil due to being forced into bloom for holiday beauty. The most critical factor is light. Different varieties have different requirements, of course, but in general a south or south-east window is best. If you have grow-lights, you most likely know how to use them. Temperatures should be moderate and whatever is comfortable for you should be comfortable for your plants. They don't like to be cold one day and hot the next. If you have a wood-stove, as most of us do, be careful not to let them get too hot; keep your plants away from the stoves. Most will tolerate wood smoke with the exception of Swedish Ivy, which will wither and die if too much smoke is present.

The most-asked question is "When should I water my plant?" This can only be answered by "when it needs water." There cannot be a set rule, as

each condition changes the requirement. A usual method to see if they are in need of water is to rub a pinch of the soil between your fingers. If it is flaky and does not hold together, then water; but if it cakes together, then don't water. A hot, dry room naturally does not have much moisture and the plants will require more frequent watering than in a cooler, more humid atmosphere. Clay pots dry out much faster than plastic and require more water also. A thorough soaking is far better than a dribble now and then, and once a week or less is usually all that's needed. Put your plant in the sink or a large vessel and water the plant until water flows from the drainage holes. Let it drain and then take it out of the water. Any plant should not be allowed to remain standing in water as the roots will rot after a short time.

I think of plants rather as children and if you treat them thus, they should do well. Keep them free of drafts, not too close to heating units, in the sun instead of a dark corner, and don't let their feet soak in a bucket of water for a week. Do talk to them as you will—plants take in carbon dioxide and benefit from your breathing on them. Whether a kind word or a scolding, they flourish either way.

General care of the most common florist plants available around Christmas time are:

Azaleas: diffused sunlight, 55 to 60°, water frequently. Plant outside in late May or early June, repot and bring inside before frost next fall. If you have a cold frame, put them there as they need to be cold but not frozen in order to bloom again next year.

Mums: Full sun, 60 to 70°, water quite frequently—don't allow them to dry out. Not really worth trying to keep for next year.

Cyclamen: full sun, cool temperatures (50-55°), bulbs may be kept from year to year. Allow to rest and repot in the spring.

Poinsettia: full sun, cool temperatures (55-60°), moist soil. Water

sparingly after red leaves have fallen and allow the plant to become dormant. In the spring, cut back to six inches, repot in regular soil mixture and water enough to keep the soil moist. Bring in before frost and place in a sunny window. Maine has ideal amounts of natural dark and light for the process of red leaves for Christmas bloom. Do not use lights at night in the room in which they are put, but leave in darkness. This requires about 14 weeks, so start the process about October first.

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Mainely Ancestors

by Lauralee Clayton

GENES & GENEALOGY

Discovering our ancestral roots brings out the Sherlock Holmes in us. Sniffing out clues, ferreting out sources and sleuthing through the pages of town histories and published genealogies leads to a warmer understanding of our origins. Sometimes the fun is finding out just who contributed 12.5% of your chromosomes. Along these lines, one genealogy buff confessed that she was pulled into the hobby due to her interest in biology.

Esther began tracking ancestors in her husband's line to determine how many times a birth occurred where the baby had one blue eye and one brown eye—an inherited family trait. Soon she was reading about hubby's grandparents, their kin and kissing cousins. Before long she was an avid genealogist with boxes of clutter on the ironing board in the bedroom. She moved it all to an outbuilding on their Colorado ranch and set up an office, formed a family association and began producing a newsletter for members of the clan. You can see where this hobby might lead.

Maine researchers whose roots run deep in New England are offered support and help through membership in one or more genealogical groups. Perhaps when you read a microfilm of the 1870 census, the information it reveals points to a migration from Vermont. I found a Hill forbear in upper New York State listed as born in Vermont. This data was confirmed in a town history of Massena, New York, which showed a number of early settlers "from Vermont." I then joined the *Genealogical Society of Vermont* (treasurer is Jean Harvie, P. O. Box 422 in Pittsford 05763) and was able to run some queries in the society's newsletter. This led to a correspondence with someone working on graveyard inscription recordings; her letters yielded clues for my research project. By joining the society, I learned much about Vermont history, Revolutionary war land grants, and migration patterns.

Another organization with even

more members (over 4,000 family historians, at one count) is the *Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc.* Located in Glastonbury, CT (mailing address P. O. Box 435, 06330), this group has siphoned its membership out of a nationwide pool of avid ancestor-hunters. Charts mailed in by members are filed in the state library in Hartford and are available for personal inspection. A bright blue magazine, "The Nutmegger," funnels into mailboxes of card-carriers. It runs about 735 pages, filled with lectures by genealogists, Connecticut vital records, history and queries on Nutmeg settlers. It was no rare thing for an English voyager to New England to land in Massachusetts, migrate to Connecticut, and have sons who then fanned out to populate Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. C.G.S. has helped me locate some of these ancestors.

Don't overlook our own *Maine Genealogical Society*, P. O. Box 221, Farmington, ME 04938-0221. Newly-elected president this year is geneticist Dr. Thomas Roderick of Bar Harbor. Officers list their ports of call as Boothbay, Norridgewock and Hallowell; the Board of Directors hails from Portland, Lincolnville, and Old Town; and still more members of the executive board reside in Solon and Rockport. The organization now boasts a membership of over 1,050 (numbered memberships) and is represented in all but two states of the union. Those who pay dues receive six copies a year of the publication "The Maine Seine," which includes free query space.

Piscataqua Pioneers was organized in 1905 and welcomes male or female line descendants of pioneers or other settlers in the original Piscataqua Settlement before July, 1776. Registrar last year was Edward G. Wood, 71 High Street in Exeter, N.H. 03833.

Those with French-Canadian ancestry might consider joining the Father Leo E. Begin Chapter of the *American-Canadian Genealogical Society*, P. O. Box 2125, Lewiston, ME 04240. Founded in 1979, the chapter just launched a genealogical conference on November 6 at the Maine State Library in Augusta. Speaking was Richard Fortin, president of the *Acadian Genealogical and Historical Association*. The Begin group's parent organization is based in Manchester, N.H.

An active historical society which

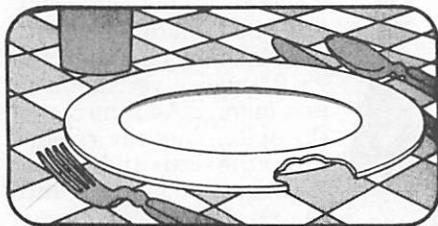
publishes an informative newsletter on Bethel area heritage is the *Bethel Historical Society*, Box 12 in Bethel, 04217. This town was subjected nearly two hundred years ago to what has been termed "New England's last Indian raid" (see *BitterSweet*, December, 1978) says a recent issue of "The Bethel Courier." If you have ancestors with links to the Androscoggin River and the early settlement of Sudbury, Canada, now known as Bethel, membership in this society may aid you in your search. I was happy to receive in the mail one day an envelope containing photocopy on the Messer family of Shelburn, New Hampshire, from a book in the society's library—information which would have eluded me without reading the "Courier" one day and seeing a reference to the Messer family.

Alan H. Hawkins is secretary of *The Maine Society, Sons of the American Revolution*, 4 Edgewater Rd., Falmouth Foreside, 04105. This fellowship also publishes a newsletter and holds its annual meeting in the month of May. If you're stalking a Revolutionary soldier in the Maine thickets, why not contact Hawkins?

Besides formal organizations with an emphasis on history and genealogy, Maine is blessed with a handful of local interest groups. For example, some seven or eight people gather on a weekly basis at the Belfast library to share in an informal setting their interest and problems in research. Chapter groups of the *Maine Genealogical Society* function as separate entities as well, meeting in such diverse locations as Farmington (contact person Arlene Low, 14 Sunset Street); Greater Portland Area (contact person, Edna Will, West Shore Road, East Sebago); Tacconnet Falls (contact Michael Dennis, Box 253, Oakland); and Augusta Area (write Faye Sproul, 17 Viles Street in that city). Genealogists in the Presque Isle and Bangor areas have also expressed interest in forming support groups or local chapters.

Casting even further afield, consider joining the Rockingham County Chapter of the *New Hampshire Society of Genealogists*, P. O. Box 81, Exeter, N.H. 03833; the *Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.*, P. O. Box 266, Dorchester Center, MA 02124; and the *Essex Society of Genealogists* c/o Marcia Wiswall, Lynnfield Public Library in Lynnfield, MA 01940.

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Food For Thought

by Lucia Owen

FOR THE BIRDS

A year ago I vowed to start filling my birdfeeder early enough to attract a goodly following for the winter. I had visions of chickadees, nuthatches, finches, and perhaps a cardinal. But I did not get around to filling the feeder and scattering seeds until Christmas. Knowledgeable friends frowned, shook their heads, and slipped old Audubon magazines into my mailbox. I kept vigil for a week, however, and was rewarded when a flock of red polls added me to their daily progress around the neighborhood.

Eagerly I awaited more and still more uncommon and fascinating birds. What did I get besides the red polls? Bluejays and pigeons. I complained bitterly about the quality of the clientele at the birdfeeder. My husband consoled me with, "Well, what did you expect? Peacocks?" I had a pheasant come one day, but the neighbor's enthusiastic retriever chased it and we never saw it again. My problem seems to be that I'm at the wrong end of town to get the classy birds. The spread I put on is as good as that of the folks who live up the hill in the better rent district. My lateness may be the real reason. And, yes, I'd like a peacock.

Last spring when the migration began, my hopes sprang, too. Maybe some special bird would find my feeder—a bluebird or a modest warbler. What arrived first to clean me out in one swoop, so to speak? Hordes of redwings, cowbirds, grackles, and starlings! By the end of winter I had mellowed towards the jays and pigeons. Any bird who decides to stay through a Maine winter is welcome to all my seeds. But the raucous gangs of blackbirds have not yet earned my sympathy. They sat in the tops of the popples behind the house and carried on like fans at a ball game. Even the great April blizzard did not daunt them. The starlings are trashy imports, but grackles are native and

should behave better. I developed a new understanding of the origin of baking four-and-twenty blackbirds in a pie.

So now in early fall I look out the window at the empty feeder. The torn onion bag that held the suet flaps like a dingy banner signalling my defeat. If I fill the feeder now, the gangs of blackbirds will devastate it once more for luck as they head south, but that will resurrect the hope of attracting a decent clientele for the winter again. My husband has offered to shoot some of them for me. Snap, grackle, and pop. If they ate gypsy moth caterpillars, the balance of nature might be served. Otherwise I can see no use for them, except to be loved by other redwings, cowbirds, grackles, and starlings.

The day after the blackbirds leave I gleefully replenish the feeder, confident now that I have started early enough. The Peterson and binoculars are right next to the window. Genghis Khan and his hordes have been appeased . . . until the next morning when, on an early coffee run, I see evening grosbeaks lined up with their trays cleaning out the feeder. They hang around throwing silverware for a while, then leave, as a refill seems unlikely. I retire in confusion and defeat. I'll wait 'til Christmas again.

Thinking about my poor luck feeding birds, I console myself with thoughts of giving dinner parties. It isn't fair to compare my guests and friends to grackles or grosbeaks. They are invited, for one thing, though they usually do empty most of the dishes set before them. Nor is my table quite the same as my birdfeeder. We should, however, all treat our guests with the same attention that we treat our winter birds—the friends will stay and survive the winter, too. What better time of year to have small casual dinners and to partake of savory, comforting food and friendship.



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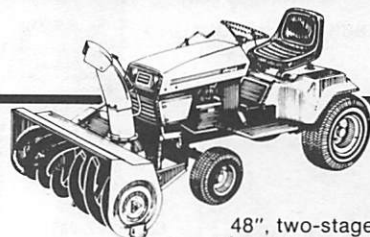
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The menu for such a gathering need not include the *foie gras* and the caviar. It should, however, avoid anything remotely suggesting turkey, for obvious reasons. Our considered choice is usually a spiced stew of some kind, the choice depending upon the time at hand to prepare it. Making a stew can range from several hours to a good deal less, but there is one for whatever time is available. With a lot of time and the desire to concoct a minor work of art, try a beef bourguignon or cassoulet. (Resist firmly the urge to make "shortened" versions of these.)

Two stews that can be prepared ahead and then reheated are given below. They are both variations on a theme and also introduce some sticky semantics. When is a stew a ragout? Let purists argue while we assemble a stifado. The recipe is on a small piece of newspaper yellow with age, and it announces itself as Greek. It sounds generically Mediterranean to me.

Stifado

3 lbs. lean stew beef in 1-1/2" cubes
salt and freshly-ground black pepper
1/2 cup butter or margarine
2-1/2 lbs. small white onions,
peeled (or one package frozen onions)
1 6-oz. can tomato paste
1/3 cup red table wine
2 Tblsp. red wine vinegar
1 Tblsp. brown sugar
1 clove garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
1 stick cinnamon
1/2 tsp. whole cloves
1/4 tsp. ground cumin
2 Tblsp. raisins (optional)

Season the meat with salt and pepper. Melt butter in a heavy kettle that has a cover. Add meat and coat it with butter without browning it.

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Arrange onions over meat. Mix the tomato paste with the wine, vinegar, sugar, and garlic; pour over the meat and onions. Add the rest of the spices and the raisins. Cover the kettle and simmer for about two hours or until the meat is tender. Do not stir.

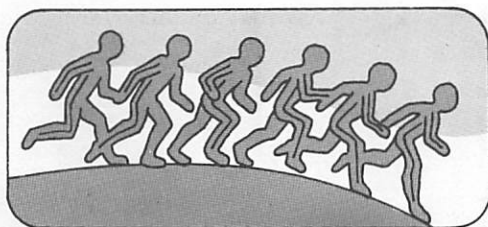
The next is a bit more traditional, having carrots, which are added at the end of the cooking. I have unashamedly plagiarized this from my college's Alumnae Association cookbook, and I brazenly present it under a new name—South Hadley Ragout.

South Hadley Ragout

3 Tblsp. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. celery salt
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper, ground
1/2 tsp. ginger
3 lbs. lean stew beef in 1-1/2" cubes
2 Tblsp. shortening
1 1-lb. can tomatoes
3 medium onions, thinly sliced
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 cup water
8 carrots, cut up
1/2 cup raisins

Combine the first six ingredients and mix with the beef. Melt the shortening in a large heavy kettle and then brown the meat. Add the tomatoes, onions, vinegar, molasses, and water. Bring to a boil, cover, then simmer about two hours. Then add the carrots and the raisins and simmer another 30 minutes or until the carrots are tender.

Both these recipes serve six, and six is the perfect number for this pre-holiday meal with friends. Conversation moves well, my husband and I can both be in the kitchen if we must, and I can only fit six at the table. Serve these dishes with noodles, potatoes, or rice and an interesting tossed salad. Buttered bread sprinkled with sesame seeds and toasted under the broiler goes well, too. An authoritative red wine is a must with a meal like this. We collectively marshal our resources amid laughter and second helpings. Tomorrow morning I'll put an extra round of sunflower seeds out in the feeder for whoever drops in.



Medicine For The Hills

by Dr. Michael Lacombe

THE LEGACY

The men stir, glance at one another, and head for the back room as they reach for their breast pockets. A wake is a heavy affair, even when the deceased is eighty years old, and a man needs a break from the grieving. Appropriately removed from the mourning, the smoking room is well-appointed, the funeral home's oasis. Ornate ashtrays accompany each well-stuffed chair. The blue-gray haze and the smell of tobacco attest to a way of life.

The men light up, taking long, slow drags, and they begin to relax. Reunited for a day in this grief, they join together as well in this ritual of manhood. The faces soften, the mood becomes more placid, and someone breaks the silence with a reminiscence. Family reunions of other, happier times are summoned up. As the spark of recollection touches each man, each recalls the good old days, those holidays and special times of years ago. Fathers and sons, uncles and cousins, each has his special moment to tell.

In those days, we'd stamp off the snow, run inside in the warmth of his home, waist-high to everyone. Dodging wet hugs and wet kisses, we'd settle in the living room and begin building houses and roads using dozens of cigarette packages as building blocks. And we'd watch the men, storing away gestures, laughs, and phrases to use later on. The women clattered the dishes in the kitchen as each man, holding beer and cigarettes in one hand as only a man can do, laughed and teased one another. He would yell, "Tiddbits!" And we, the children, would run for the kitchen and the carving. Cigarette dangling, left eye squinting against the smoke, he'd pass out bits of warm turkey and skin to his "little chickens." Each of us, busy with study of the lessons of manhood, watched his moves.

At dinner the schooling continued. Uncles rolled their eyes and aunts

were politely quiet as we learned about doing things well and loving our family and how to raise the best turkeys and how not to smoke until we were twenty-one. Each boy at the table stored all this away.

The table cleared, women gossiped in the kitchen, and the men sat down to poker. We watched, fascinated, in the living room, and tried to imitate with games of our own. He always seemed to win and reminded them of that, and Art always lost, and they all continually nursed lighted cigarettes.

The years passed, and time for him became more important than material gains. With retirement a reality, he gained some time. But this time for him was less than it might have been. They called it simply old age, but the pursed lips, barrel chest, and slow, measured steps were more than the result of old age. No wind, he said, and gave up his garden, his roses, and his birds. Deprived of air, he gave up driving, then long walks in the fall, then even going out-of-doors. The vigorous, tattooed ex-sailor became a shut-in. He lived his three-score-and-ten, but lost his golden years. And he left, unwittingly, a legacy. His grandsons, every one, learned to smoke.

My cousin, seventeen and confused with all this death and sadness, snubs his third cigarette and moves to be with his mother. The rest, suddenly awakened from the reverie, hastily take a long last drag and follow out. Great-uncle Henry, brother of the deceased, looking more like sixty than eighty, is a haunting example of what could have been for his brother. He rushes about, greeting and comforting everyone, marvelling at how we've grown. And he has the wind to do it. He has never smoked. But no one there seems to make the connection. No one sees himself in the casket.

We seem to lose the simplest lessons of life. We forget how dear to us is our health; and how precious the quality

Page 44...

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Admiral
George Tate
(1745-1821), 1st
Admiral of
Russian Navy

TATE HOUSE - Crown of the Maine Mast Trade

Barry, William David and
Peabody, Frances W.

National Society of Colonial Dames
of America in the State of Maine
Portland, 1982

Portland has been celebrating its 350th birthday this year and one of the choicest "gifts" may be this small book. Also to commemorate the 50th year of the Colonial Dames' stewardship of the house, the book is a detailed account of the establishment, growth, and demise of the mast-iron industry in Maine.

The finished product, however, is much more than an accounting of a particular business during a particular period in a particular place. It is, rather, a fascinating story of a man, Captain George Tate, Sr., who built a successful industry and an elegant house which today stands as a memorial to that life.

The greater part of the book reads like a history book, giving information on the settlement of Stroudwater Landing and the Neck (Portland) and the events leading up to the development of the mast trade. The second part is more a guide book telling what has happened to the Tate House since the last Tate was in residence in 1803.

While clearly stating "this publication does not claim to be definitive," the authors do provide an enormous amount of information about this family, which supplied America's only Admiral in the Russian Navy; as well as an exhaustive appendix to whet the interest of many who want to know more about the people and events of that part of Maine's past.

Winifred I. Mott

Mrs. Mott was the former Wini Drag, a frequent contributor of book reviews to *BitterSweet*. We congratulate her on her recent wedding.

A MAINE ALBUM

Hankins, Dr. John

The poetry of John Hankins—who has been called "The Robert Frost of Maine" (though he needs no such comparison)—is

available now in a special edition, *A Maine Album*, which comes to us just in time for Christmas giving. The price (\$3.95, postage prepaid) is low enough to allow us to put one in every stocking; it's a little like finding a diamond ring with a 50¢ price tag at a barnyard sale.

This newest collection of his verse contains 82 poems and has been handsomely illustrated with line drawings, sparse and effective as the poems themselves, by John David Hankins (son of the author).

People, plants, animals, and allegories are portrayed in simple, yet profound language. Hankins evokes poignant, sometimes powerful images as he describes the gentle, rhythmic character of Maine's humanity and landscape.

Consider this opening stanza from William Spurr:

*William (or Bill) was odd, even for
Maine
Where everyone's a little pixillated
(We are not called the Mainiacs for
nothing!)
Wholly indifferent to what others
thought,
He went his way, pursued his own
concerns . . .*

Off The Shelf Book Reviews

And from *Democracy*:

*In Maine there are no servants.
Hired man, hired hands,
Hired help, hired girls, the cleaning
woman,
Workers, laborers, once-orphaned
bound-boys,
But never servants. Only the local pastor
Is self-proclaimed and called a servant
of God . . .*

*What's in a name? We have good
families*

*Some not so good in popular esteem,
But these are fluid lines, easily crossed.
Officially there is no high or low;
All find one level on Town Meeting
Day.*

Even if you've lived here all your life, Hankins' poems will awaken your eyes to what has been around you all this time and yet you may never have "seen" or commented upon—for he is a philosopher as well as a man of letters, an artist who paints with his mind. On him, nothing is lost.

A Maine Album, published by Oxford Group, Norway, can be ordered directly from the author, RFD Otisfield, Oxford, ME 04270. It will also be available at Books-n-Things, Oxford Plaza.



Dr. John
Hankins

Hankins is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Maine at Orono; author of numerous articles and scholarly books (several on Shakespeare) and a previously-published book of poetry (*Poems 1970*). He is also a frequent contributor to Maine's newspapers and *BitterSweet*. He is a member of the Poetry Fellowship of Maine and a former member of the Poetry Society of Kansas.

Pat White Gorrie

RED PINE, BLACK ASH

Aldridge, Richard
Thorndike Press

It is often said that currently there are more people writing poetry than there are readers. The reason for this could very well be that all too many modern poets are not writing the type of poems that the public can enjoy.

Occasionally there emerges a poet who is particularly sensitive to the world around him and whose verse rekindles one's quiescent love for poetry. Such a poet is Richard Aldridge, whose most recent book of poetry has been published by Thorndike Press, a publishing company that in itself is sensitive to the general reading public, particularly here in Maine.

In *Red Pine, Black Ash*, Aldridge has compiled over one hundred of his poems, ranging from tight verse to blank and free verse. In each poem, Aldridge has successfully woven a delicate fabric of imagery with lyrics that are pleasing to the ear as well as the eye. As the title of his attractively-bound book implies, the theme is Nature, for Richard Aldridge has lived close to the land and the sea most of his life.

Born in New York City, the son of a leading gynecologist and obstetrician, Aldridge graduated from Deerfield Academy and Amherst, in Massachusetts. At Amherst, he was awarded the Collin Armstrong Prize for "the best undergraduate poem or group of poems"—an encouragement for him to devote his life to the writing of poetry.

Following Army service in Germany, he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to the Honours School of English Language and Literature at Worcester College,

Oxford University, Oxford, England. There he completed his Master's Degree, *cum laude*, in 1957.

Aldridge first began coming to Maine as a camper at a small private camp at West Point. It was owned and operated by Emma Haskell, wife of famous artist/etcher Ernest Haskell. Their daughter Josephine, herself an author of several children's books, became Aldridge's wife and they moved to her mother's saltwater farm in 1958 when Aldridge gave up a job with Doubleday Publishing Co.

Richard Aldridge, a member of the English Department at Morse High School, has had four books of poetry published. In 1970 he made a valuable contribution to Maine literature by editing **Maine Lines: 101 Contemporary Poems About Maine**, published by Lippincott. The first poetry editor for the *Maine Times*, he has given several public readings of his work and has participated in the Poetry-in-Schools program of the Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Red Pine, Black Ash serves as a paragon of one man's perseverance and dedication to poetry. As Tim Loeb, editor of Thorndike Press and publisher of Aldridge's latest work, stated: it "deserved to be published." It also deserves a place on every library shelf and in the collection of all discriminating poetry lovers. Even those who seldom read poetry should find **Red Pine, Black Ash** delightful reading; for Aldridge's poems touch very close to the heart of almost everyone.

Jack Barnes

... Page 36 Ancestors

We've skimmed the cream for you and hope you find at least one of these addresses helpful. When writing any of the above organizations, be sure to enclose a courtesy SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope), preferably legal-sized. Sending an SASE is standard fare for genealogists and encourages replies, I've found. It's good practice to enclose one every time you write for information, to a town clerk, another genealogist, or a public library. It is also thoughtful to return both thanks and a stamp to anyone who takes the time to answer a query you might insert in a newspaper or genealogical publication. Stamps often lead the way to correspondence and friendships through the mail. Come a bitter cold day when the snow flies and swirls around you as you trudge to the post office or mail box, there's nothing sweeter than a passel of mail from your genealogy chums.

"Query friends," my husband calls 'em.

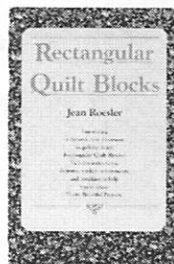
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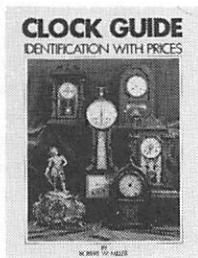
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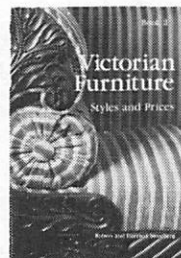


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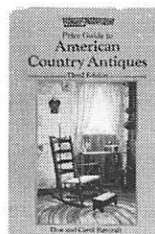


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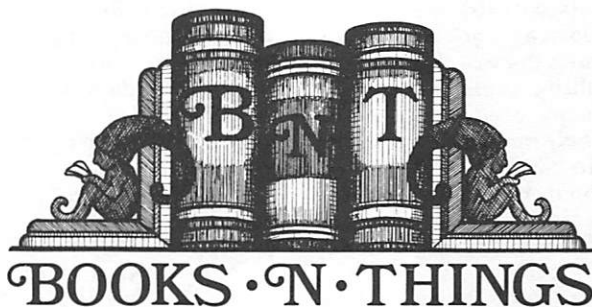
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Wrecks & Memories on the Grand Trunk

THE FOLIAGE TRAIN PART IV by John R. Davis

Leaving Bethel, Route 2 parallels the railroad on the southside of the train as it enters the Androscoggin Valley proper with the Great River itself occasionally visible on the northside. Sunday motorists, not anticipating the sudden appearance of a passenger train, become caught up in the spectacle, and race ahead through Skillingston to reach a vantage point for viewing the train when it speeds across the West Bethel flats. Only the train speed begins to slacken coming out of the curve into the straightaway as Conductor Gordon LeFebvre passes spotting instructions over the radio for the photostop and run-by at Allens.

The train leans into a shallow right-hand curve, gliding slowly past the small cluster of buildings, and comes to a stop at the western fringe of the hamlet. The vestibule attendants step down, set footstools in place, and from each doorway the number of passengers scurrying to a choice point for photographing, taping, or simply watching the proceedings, causes knowledgeable motorists to pull off the roadway in bewilderment.

Usually about two-thirds of the voyagers detrain, and when all are safely clear of the tracks, the conductor radios that it is okay to back up; whereupon the long train moves slowly in reverse and around the curve out of sight, halts, then comes forward with a burst of rapid acceleration to flash by the great throng of exuberant spectators at speed and all-

too-quickly disappear into the woods. Though the sun is not shining, none of the onlookers appear to have been disappointed as the train returns to spot for embarking them. Conductor LeFebvre calls up the all set to go, Gordy whistles off, and slowly the train moves forward and across Bridge Number 47, the Pleasant River.

How Professor Haines would have relished a train such as this on which to ply his trade in the 1870's: coach after coach coming out of the curve onto the short straightaway near the Mason Farm gravel pit. With so many people on board, all in high spirits from the festive air within the great train length, surely one or more of them would have rescued him from catching himself a Tartar. Like on the fabled Mississippi riverboats, gamblers rode back and forth on every railway in those days, and on this line it was the Professor. One January day in 1874, an innocent-appearing young lad boarded the train far down the line and occupied the seat next to him. After some distance the conversation turned to poker and soon the stranger found four Kings in his hand. Of course, the Professor had put his last dollar on the board. Then the green one rose and slapped down a pocketbook containing \$900. The Professor went through all the coaches trying to borrow so as to get a sight for his money. But no one would lend to him, and after a time the stranger raked in his wallet and the Profes-

At left, passengers detrain to photograph a train run-by at Allens. Photo by Bill Robertson.

sor's \$200, smiled, and got off at Gilead.

From the gravel pit to Gilead the track and rivers share the same embankment much of the way. A considerable number of ledges were hewn away to enable the railway's passage and the awesome beauty of the mountainsides lining the narrow valley disguise the occasions when passage was not made in serenity. *Beyond the curve passing the Mason Farm a merchandise train derailed in 1913—no one, fortunately, received injury, but cars were stacked across the track like cordwood. In Peabody Hollow, the scattered coal along the curve ahead marks the site of the 1916 head-on collision between two freights, perhaps the most tragic of all wrecks on this section of the line, for it came on Christmas Eve and during a snow-storm. Four men perished in the crash and a fifth man died several days later from his injuries. Both trains were in possession of orders to meet at Gilead, but the eastbound somehow overran the village. They met on the curve with such force that the east-bound engine, a large 500 class Mikado-type, went onto its side on the riverbank while the westbound engine, a heavy eastbound 700 class Consolidation, was turned around and literally torn apart. Its removal from the scene resembled a carload of junk. Yet both engines were completely rebuilt and continued to draw trains into the late 1950's. One of the surviving crewmen, a rear brakeman, never again would accept a run that meant being on the road the day before Christmas.*

The valley widens slightly at Gilead village, where most of the residences are neatly aligned along a shelf of land between the river and railroad track. Other than the old section tool-house to the southside of the train, few visible traces remain from the era when this was an interchange yard with the Wild River Lumber Railroad. The logging line, with its gear-driven Shay engines, or "turtles" as the lumberjack railroaders called them, swung off to the left at the approach to Bridge Number 47, Wild River, and followed the left bank of the river up into the slopes above Hastings.

Route 2 reappears on the southside

as the train passes over the state line into New Hampshire, and ahead, at the ledge where the Great Androscoggin swings in extremely close to the track, is the stone settle, with a company marker to commemorate "Granny Stalbird." *Granny was Deborah Vickers, the young widow of an early settler, who through the years had learned the ways of Indian medicine with sufficient expertise to become a legendary doctress. Travelling horseback about the region, in a long plaid cloak and hood, with her bag of medicinal concoctions, she treated whoever was ill. On one of her journeys she was overtaken by a severe storm and spent the night beneath a shelving rock at this place, sheltered from the raging winds and rain and terrible howling of the wolves. When the railroad came through, that rock was blasted away.*

The broad meadow at Shelburne Village and Leadmine Crossing flash by quickly, and the train emerges onto a long fill that slices across an unusually large bay of the Androscoggin—the far shoreline of the main riverway northside of the track, and to the southside, the portion known as Shelburne Pool. Together they present a sufficient breadth to afford one the condensed sensation of being on the Lucin Cutoff crossing the Great Salt Lake. Considering how one could become seasick just from watching the middle locomotive buck around in the ess-curves and bounce on the straight stretches since leaving the Bethel/Gilead town line, there is a sense of relief at reaching dry land at the far end of the causeway.

Approaching Gorham, New Hampshire, the highway shoulders on both sides of the Route 2 grade crossing ahead are lined with autos, their drivers fanned out along the right-of-way, cameras in focus. Dedicated golfers on the fairway to the northside do check their swing to stand and watch the train pass. Bridge Number 61, the Peabody River, a through tuss-type, rumbles to the unit's entry, and a glance from the southside of the train into Pinkham Notch at the proper moment will, for a brief instant, offer a glimpse of Mount Washington's peak.

Be with us in our next issue in March as the saga of the foliage train trip to Island Falls, Vermont, continues.



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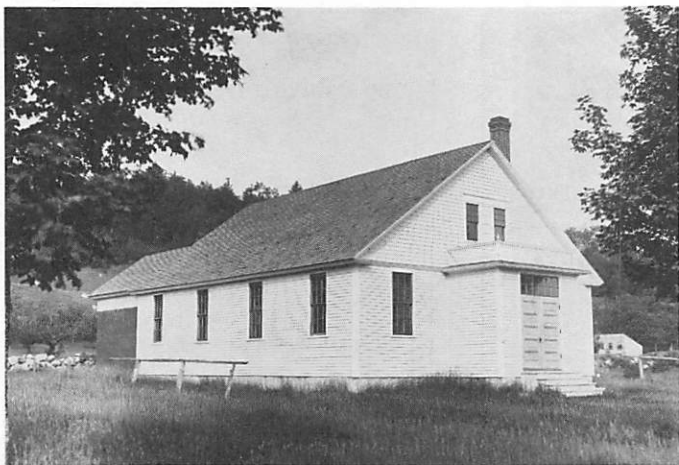
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THAT CHEW RAY? AYUP.
WELL IF YOU RUN ACROSS MY BARN IN YER TRAVELS... LET ME KNOW...O.K?



- Norway
- Bridgton
- Fryeburg
- Naples



Can You Place It?

Mrs. Irene K. Bean of Norway (formerly of South Waterford) recognized last month's picture as the Goodwin home in South Waterford



George Allen discovered the pictures on this page—and more—in the course of the historical resource survey for Oxford County. We don't know where they were taken, but we have a few suspicions. Because we don't know, we can't award a prize, but we will print the information we receive in the March issue. Write us at Box 6, Norway, ME 04268.



... Page 39 Medicine

of life. We lose sight of the power of our actions—actions watched carefully by the children around us, for whom words alone are not enough.

This year make a different resolution. consider your children. Don't smoke in front of them.

... Page 35 Potpourri

Gloxinia: indirect sun, moderate 65-70° temperatures, high humidity and moist soil. A relative of the African Violet, this should be treated similarly.

African Violet: indirect sun, match

humidity to temperature—meaning warm temperature/high humidity; cool temperature/low humidity. New plants are easily started from a single leaf placed in soil.

Christmas Cactus: not really a cactus and requires moist soil, full sun, and cool temperatures. If treated as your poinsettia with light and dark requirements, it will bloom again next Christmas. Start the darkening September first and keep the plant below 70° degrees at night.

My wish for each of you is for the merriest Christmas ever and may the New Year bring fulfillment of your brightest hopes and dreams.

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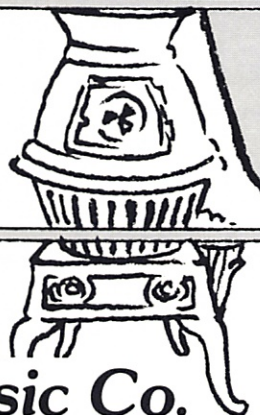
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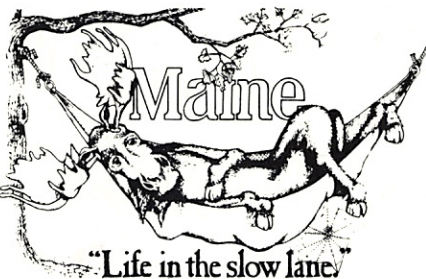
Formerly the L & F Country Store 3 miles west of Bethel on Rt. 2



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We introduced our **Original Maine Coon** on T-shirts in the summer of 1978. The response was so great that we kept on designing. We now carry over 60 designs that are screen-printed on T-shirts, bags, sweatshirts, baseball shirts, nightshirts, and more.

1982 has been the **Year of the Moose** for us, with Life In The Slow Lane starting a surge of moose designs that include the Laidback Moose you see here; the moose sitting on a stump, saying, "Yuh not from round here are ya?"; with all his animal friends, saying, "I love Maine." And again, holding a hunter, saying, "Don't Shoot the Natives"; or riding atop the family car "Touring Maine."



We've had a ball sharing our ideas and art work with you at craft fairs and retail stores all over New England. Now you'll be able to find us all the time. At the Trap and Outlet, you'll find the largest selection of **Groan & McGurn** goods in the world, plus a pleasing selection of other people's creations—from pewter to inedible slices of scrumptious-looking pie!

Please come in and wander through our wonders . . . this December for Christmas presents or this winter to break your cabin fever. Come again in spring when our greenhouses are in their splendor.

From now until Christmas we will be open 9 to 6 Mon. thru Sat. The rest of the winter 9 to 5 Mon. thru Sat. (Maybe more come Summer.) OPEN HOUSE SPECIALS, SALES & GIVEAWAYS every Fri. and Sat. until Christmas.

Special Note: Play area for kids so parents can shop. And for a while, free balloons to the kids. Remember—we have something for everyone and factory seconds at greatly reduced prices!